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ABSTRACT

This documentary tells the wartime story of Le Chambon, a tiny Protestant village in France that defied the Nazi occupation and provided a safe haven for thousands of Jews. Using interviews, old photographs and footage, and specially declassified documents, the film [and transcript] examine the difference between being a bystander and a participant in the salvation of Jews from Nazis, and celebrates humanity's capacity for good. The transcript of the documentary and Bill Moyers' interviews with Pierre Sauvage includes over 70 pages of background articles, interviews, maps, bibliographies, and directed discussion guidelines for the classroom. (DQE)

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ED 398 108

"Weapons of the Spirit"

Transcript of the feature documentary

Bill Moyers Interviews Filmmaker Pierre Sauvage

Transcript of the P.B.S. broadcast

and additional background material on
"Weapons of the Spirit,"
Friends of Le Chambon,
and Pierre Sauvage

SO 026 356

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS 2
LETTER TO THE READER 3
WITNESSES 4
"WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT" 6
"WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT" SCREEN CREDITS 54
BILL MOYERS' TELEVISION INTRODUCTION OF "WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT" 63
"BILL MOYERS INTERVIEWS FILMMAKER PIERRE SAUVAGE" 64
"BILL MOYERS INTERVIEWS FILMMAKER PIERRE SAUVAGE" 73
VIDEO CREDITS 73
ADDITIONAL MATERIAL 74
VIDEOTAPE AND TRANSCRIPT INFORMATION 74
COMMENTS ABOUT "WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT" 74
ABOUT FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON 74
PIERRE SAUVAGE—PUBLIC SPEAKER 74
FRENCH COMMENTS ABOUT "WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT" 74
"A TIME FOR RESCUE: VARIAN FRY AND THE EMERGENCY RESCUE COMMITTEE" 74
"THE OPTIMISTS: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE BULGARIAN JEWS AND THEIR SURVIVAL DURING THE HOLOCAUST" 74
"AND CROWN THY GOOD: THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE OF THE HOLOCAUST" .. 74
"YIDDISH: THE MAME-LOSHN" 74
LIFESTYLE: ARTICLE ON PIERRE SAUVAGE AND FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON 74
DuPONT-COLUMBIA AWARDS ADDRESS BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, JAN. 30, 1992 74
INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE: ARTICLE ON LE CHAMBON, OCT. 13-14, 1990 74
LOS ANGELES TIMES: ARTICLE ON LE CHAMBON, OCT. 15, 1990 74
TIME INTERNATIONAL: ARTICLE ON LE CHAMBON, NOV. 5, 1990 74
ASSOCIATED PRESS: ARTICLE ON RIGHTEOUS GENTILES, MAY 29, 1984 74
"LEARNING HOPE FROM THE HOLOCAUST," ADDRESS BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, JULY 1988 74
"TEN THINGS I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT IN LE CHAMBON AND ELSEWHERE DURING THE HOLOCAUST," ARTICLE BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, FALL 1985 74
"ON BEING A CHILD OF THE HOLOCAUST," ADDRESS BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, MARCH 11, 1984 74
"JESUS AS A GOY," ARTICLE BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, SEPT. 24, 1988 74
"A MOST PERSISTENT HAVEN," ARTICLE BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, OCT. 1983 74
"WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT: A JOURNEY HOME," ARTICLE BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, MARCH 17, 1987 74
"PAIN, GUILT AND RAGE: HAVE WE MOVED BEYOND," INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, NOV. 6, 1988 74
"WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT: CLASSROOM VERSION—VIEWER'S GUIDE," ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE 74

LETTER TO THE READER

This transcript is a work in progress.

Weapons of the Spirit, the film, is finished, for better or for worse. But words have always mattered to me as much or more than pictures. This transcript will in time evolve into *Weapons of the Spirit—The Book*. The idea is an illustrated and annotated transcript—annotated by me and by others, perhaps including you.

My model, simplistically speaking, is the Talmud: I love the idea of commentaries upon commentaries. The few rough and random footnotes included in today's edition probably do not suggest what I am still groping towards.

Another model, at least for the marketing of this transcript, is the computer software industry, with its periodic upgrades of programs. This is release 1.1.

I welcome your feedback, your comments, your questions, your criticisms. I will not answer all of those who may write—I have still not mastered my schedule that way. But I certainly always read all that I receive, often with extreme interest.

Indeed, I will especially welcome comments bearing on specific, even ostensibly minor points. I will in fact integrate some of these comments in the future updates that will precede final hard-bound publication.

Finally, I wish to stress that a film, of course, is not meant to be read. Its words are chosen for their effect in combination with pictures, silence, sounds, and music.

Anybody reading this without having seen the film will be missing much essential and indeed quintessential material which has not here been reduced to words, or even as yet to photographs. Moreover, the interruptions that I will provide—more and more frequent as this transcript evolves, and as yet frustratingly unmediated by artful page layout—will for such a reader resemble the annoying mumbling of somebody who insists on talking to you when you're obviously trying to concentrate on something else

Chances are, however, that if you've ordered the transcript, you may be interested in knowing more about how the film came to be and some of the choices and influences that brought it into being. Am I right?

Most sincerely,

Pierre Sauvage

WITNESSES
in order of appearance

- **Pierre Sauvage**, the filmmaker and narrator.
- **Henri and Emma Héritier**, the peasant couple who sheltered the village forger and other Jews, also helping the filmmaker's family. Monsieur Héritier: "When people came, if we could be of help..."
- **Charles Gibert**, the old villager who sings the local Huguenot hymn and plays the harmonica.
- **Joseph Atlas**, the young Polish Jew who felt himself sheltered by a Protestant community.
- **Hilde and Jean Hillebrand**, the German Jew married to a German Protestant, who remember that the villagers risked their lives.
- **Georgette Barraud**, who ran a boarding home that took in many Jews. "It happened so naturally, we can't understand the fuss."
- **Lesley Maber**, the Englishwoman who moved to Le Chambon before the war. "People who seem very ordinary can do great things if they're given the opportunity."
- **Pastor Édouard Theis**, the assistant pastor of Le Chambon during the war. "For the Pétain regime we had nothing but contempt."
- **Magda Trocmé**, the widow of pastor André Trocmé, pastor of Le Chambon during the war. "If we'd had an organization, we would have failed."
- **Nelly Trocmé Hewett**, the American daughter of André and Magda Trocmé for whom the Jews were simply "part of the community and part of the school just as we were."
- **Peter Feigl**, the American businessman who as a 14 year-old smuggled across the Swiss border photographs of his fellow refugees.
- **Henriette and Robert Bloch**, the French Jews who just couldn't imagine what was happening to the Jews of France.
- **Marguerite Roussel**, the Catholic woman who like the other members of the area's Catholic minority joined actively in the rescue effort. "We never analyzed what we were doing. It happened by itself."
- **Madeleine Dreyfus**, the French Jewish relief worker who always succeeded in placing Jewish children in the farmhouses of the area.

- **Pastor Marc Donadille**, the respectful Christian relief worker at the *Coteau Fleuri* (the Flowery Hill), the home for Jews rescued from French internment camps.

- **Marie Brottes**, the Christian fundamentalist for whom the Jews were the People of God. "And the Jew, truly, had fallen among thieves."

- **Georges Lamirand**, the Vichy Minister for Youth who went on an official visit to Le Chambon during the war.

- **Pierre Fayol**, the French Jew who served as the Resistance leader in the district.

- **Adolphe and Aline Caritey**, whose home was the headquarters of the armed resistance in Le Chambon.

- **Roger Bonfils**, whose hotel was the headquarters of the Germans in Le Chambon.

- **Émile Sèches**, who ran the Jewish boarding home for children next door to the German headquarters.

- **Oskar Rosowsky**, the Jewish teenager who forged false I.D. for all who needed them.

- **Paul Majola**, the young shepherd who helped in the distribution of the false papers.

- **André and Ginette Weil**, the Jewish couple who met in the area during the war.

- **Marguerite Kohn**, the Orthodox Jew who remembers that her neighbors respected her faith.

- **Roger Darcissac**, the public school director who told authorities there were no Jews in his school. "It was the human thing to do, or something like that."

- **Émile Grand**, who remembers that his neighbor Albert Camus was writing a book about a plague.

- **Léa Roche and Évelyne Verilhac**, the mother and daughter who rented a room in their farm to the filmmaker's family.

"WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT"

Fade-up on opening title card:

> "There always comes a time in history when the person who dares to say that two plus two equals four is punished with death.
>
> "And the issue is not what reward or what punishment will be the outcome of that reasoning. The issue is simply whether or not two plus two equals four."
>
> Albert Camus, The Plague .

NARRATION (PIERRE SAUVAGE):

I am a Jew born in Nazi-occupied France.

---

[1] I chose to translate Camus' use of the masculine pronoun *celui* (the man who...) as "the person." The context is oh-so-generic, and in this instance linguistic gender-neutrality comes more easily in English than in French. I'm sure Camus would have understood.

I have often wondered how many viewers of the film wonder what in the world these words mean, coming as they do out of the blue (more precisely, out of the black). I certainly believe that the words are important and very relevant, and of course the relationship of Camus' novel with the area of Le Chambon, mentioned towards the end of the film, played a part in my pleasure in placing this quote from Camus at the beginning, as did the fact that Camus was an admiration that my father and I had in common.

But strictly in movie terms, I came to realize that using a quote at the beginning of the film had an additional important benefit that I had not actually thought through when I decided on it. When a movie begins, spectators are often still winding down their conversations and the movie does not receive the viewer's immediate undivided attention.

When words appear on a screen, however, viewers immediately begin reading them and pondering them, particularly if they are concerned that the text may leave the screen too fast. Thus, whatever the viewers may have been able to get out of the quote, for my part *I* was able to get their full attention for my very first words that follow, which might not otherwise have been the case.

The reader, of course, can ponder away to her or his heart's content.

Fade up and zoom in on a photograph of a baby being hugged by his father.

At that time, a spiritual plague was still sweeping throughout the western world. It produced the Holocaust, the Holocaust that mutilated my family, burned my roots, wiped out one third of my people.

Dissolve to a pre-war photograph of a Jewish family in Poland.

This was my mother's family in Poland before the war. She lost her mother, her younger brother, her sister, her brother-in-law, her little niece.[2]

Dissolve to a photograph of a baby in the arms of his mother.

[2]When my mother saw a first draft of this film, she asked me to take three things out. I slept on it and then agreed to do so. At that time, given the rebellion that this film represented, I felt that my cooperation was appropriate, although I was aware of the strong case that could be made that there was something fundamentally wrong in my agreeing to the deletions.
Originally, I had written "my mother's family *in Bialystok, Poland*" but my mother asked me to delete the reference to her birthplace. She also asked me to eliminate the names of my dead relatives, whom I had originally identified: "She lost her mother, Feigl Suchowolski, her younger brother Memel Suchowolski, her sister Helaina Pisar, her brother-in-law David Pisar, her little niece, Frieda Pisar."
The road blocks to memory that my parents set up remain so effective to this day that remembering these names still doesn't come naturally to me.

And yet, my parents and I, and many others, were sheltered in a village in the mountains of France.

Fade-up on the sounds of a train.

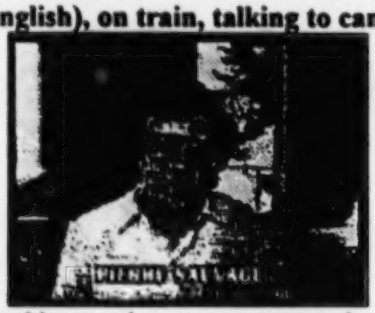
I returned there to find out why.

A tiny steam-engine train puffs its way through a meadow. A man (the filmmaker), viewed from the back, is sitting alone in an otherwise empty compartment. Music: slow, persistent mandolin concerto by Vivaldi, the "red priest."[3]

In the beginning, a few Jews made their way to this tiny corner of the world.
And the peasants and villagers of the area took in the Jews who came.
And the Jews kept coming.
And the people of Le Chambon kept taking them in.
Individuals, couples, families.
The children, the elderly, people of all ages.
Those who could pay and those who couldn't.
Doctors and merchants and intellectuals and homemakers.

PIERRE SAUVAGE

(in English), on train, talking to camera:

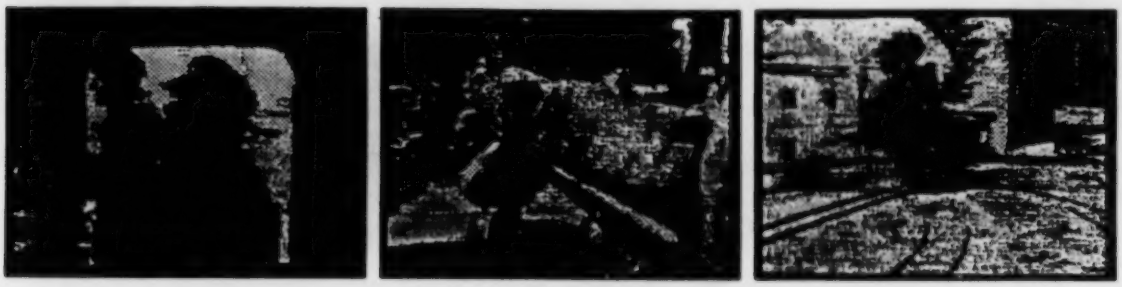


It's on a train very much like this one that my parents arrived in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in the fall of 1943. A friend had steered them here. And they rented a room in a farmhouse with some peasants named Roche. Not much is left of the farm.[4]

My mother was pregnant, and on March 25, 1944, a Jewish baby had the good fortune to see the light of day in a place on earth uniquely committed to his survival.

3

[4]At the time I shot this sequence, I had no idea that I would find the Roches before shooting was completed.



The train approaches a village, blows its (shofar-like) whistle. We hear a montage of voices, as the train enters a tiny railroad station. The Vivaldi concerto heard earlier resumes.

NARRATION:

The Nazis had proclaimed a Thousand-Year Reich and appeared triumphant.

But for the people of the area of Le Chambon, that was beside the point. Here, in the course of four long years, 5,000 Jews were sheltered—by 5,000 Christians.[5]

Jews who were there, remember:

AUDIO MONTAGE:

I would say they were the most solid people on earth (**ÉMILE SÈCHES**).

I have a very good impression of the Chambonnais people (**JOSEPH GODEFRYD**).

An outburst of solidarity that simply couldn't be imagined (**ANDRÉ WEIL**).

We might not be here were it not for this land (**HENRIETTE BLOCH**).

Not only were we accepted despite our differences, which is just about all a Jew asks for and can ask for from the community in which he lives, but here, there was a feeling of affection (**OSKAR ROSOWSKY**).

I will always be moved when I think of these people (**GINETTE WEIL**).

A wonderful memory (**ANDRÉ WEIL**).

An atmosphere of peace (**ROBERT BLOCH**).

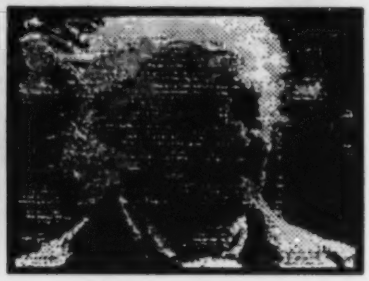
---

[5]Five thousand is an approximation, based in large measure on testimony included later in the film. The people of the village of Le Chambon are sensitive that it be clear that it was the population of the whole plateau who was involved in this effort, and not just the residents of the village of Le Chambon.

The shorthand of "Le Chambon" has, however, registered mightily, and for all my ostensible efforts to be accurate I've certainly allowed the symbolism to stick. Although my narration here as elsewhere was carefully chosen, I realize now how completely the image of the train entering the village overwhelms that precision and that the "Here" referred to in this narration is understandably experienced as meaning in this village *that we are now seeing*.

The train stops at the station. The sign says: Le Chambon-sur-Lignon-Le Mazet. The music fades out. Cut to an elderly couple, standing near a stone farmhouse.

HENRI and EMMA HÉRITIER:



HENRI HÉRITIER:

We never asked for explanations. When people came, if we could be of help...

But you knew you were taking risks in sheltering Jews?

In the beginning, it wasn't all that risky. But then towards the end, of course, it did grow dangerous.

But you kept them anyway.

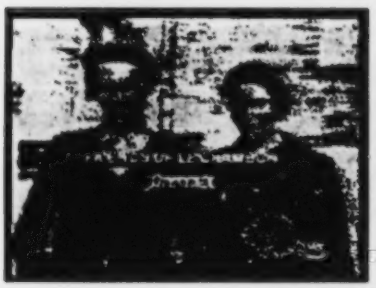
Oh yes.

Why?

EMMA HÉRITIER:

I don't know. We were used to it.[6]

She looks at him, then looks down at the ground. Dissolve to old black-and-white photograph of the same couple, much younger, smiling at the camera.[7] The Vivaldi concerto resumes, swells and ends (this time in an orchestral version), as the title sequence unfolds.



FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON
PRESENTS
WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT
A FILM BY PIERRE SAUVAGE

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[6]"No one knows what he is doing so long as he is acting rightly; but of what is wrong one is always conscious." Goethe.
"We become brave by doing brave acts." Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics"

[7]The snapshot was taken in front of the very same farmhouse. As it happens, an inscription on the back of the photograph indicates that it was taken in March 1944--the month that I was born. These are the people, these are the faces, that welcomed me into the world.

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Pan down photograph of the Eiffel Tower showing happy German soldiers at the bottom. Newsreel clips of the division of France in 1940, children bringing flowers to Marshal Pétain, Pétain shaking hands with Hitler. Music: contemporaneous jazz (Django Reinhardt).[8]

NARRATION:

In 1940, France fell to the Nazis in less than six weeks. The Germans divided the country in two and occupied the northern half.

In the southern zone, also known as the "free" zone, France had a new leader: Marshal Philippe Pétain, the venerated 84 year-old hero of World War I. From his capital in the town of Vichy, Pétain urged collaboration with the Nazi occupies.

The existence of the Vichy government was a convenient arrangement for the Nazis, and the French were allowed to continue administering all of France.

Strident report from a French newsreel (1941), complete with opening musical fanfare and enthusiastic French voice-over speaker.[9]

NEWSREEL:

In Paris, the exhibit The Jew in France *has just opened. During the first three days, over thirteen thousand people have already visited this remarkable exhibit, which gathers together documents and photographs demonstrating the Jewish threat in every aspect of our national life. These graphs, these charts, these statistics are mind-boggling. They prove the extent to which France—a victim of her traditional sense of hospitality—had become infested with Jewishness. All high government positions had fallen into the hands of Jews. After throwing into war a people profoundly attached to peace, the Jews led France to the most utter defeat in her history. Such was the destructive effect of the Jews in France!*

Newsreel clip of Pétain signing a decree. Documents of antisemitic legislation. I.D. card with "*JUIF*" ("JEW") stamped on it. Pan on photograph from graffiti "*ICI JUIF*" ("Here Jewish") to broken storefront window. Percussion accentuation (Élisa Trocmé[10]).

NARRATION:

Less than four months after coming to power, Marshal Pétain signed the first decree defining Jews under French law—and banning them from holding public office or working in the mass media.

Soon, there would be an ever-growing number of restrictions on a Jew's right to earn a living, get an education, own property, travel.

Newreel clip of Hitler at a Nazi rally, ranting in German ("Nothing is possible if one will doesn't order and is obeyed—from the top to the bottom!"). Montage of Jews who had found refuge in France (and who later survived in Le Chambon).[11] Maurice Ravel's mournful *Kaddisch* begins.[12]

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9
10
11
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Throughout the century and the rise of European antisemitism, many European Jews had fled to Paris. By 1940, nearly half of France's 350,000 Jews were foreign-born.

Drawing of a giant Nazi (Heinrich Himmler) poised to grab refugees standing forlornly in front of the closed door of U.S. Consulate.

The western world, including the United States, had slammed its doors on the threatened Jews. France, a traditional land of asylum, had been the last refuge.

Photos of people behind barbed wire and in detention.[13]

The Vichy government ordered foreign Jews into numerous and dreadful French-run internment camps. This was Gurs, one of the worst, originally built for refugees from the Spanish Civil War.[14]

Most of these camps were in the unoccupied southern zone.

Montage of photos of round-ups of Jews in Paris by French police. Photograph of a group of children in a camp. Photograph of Orthodox Jews at prayer in a camp.

Roundups began in broad daylight in 1941 in the streets of Paris. It was French police who performed these roundups.

The French camps were not extermination camps, and you could sometimes get Jews out. But 3,000 Jews died in these camps, even before the day came when the Nazis began what they called the "resettlement" of the Jews in the east.

Newsreel showing a family gathering around a radio, Pétain speaking to the camera.

Marshal PHILIPPE PÉTAIN **(newsreel):**

I need your faith. The faith of your heart. The faith of your reason. Remember above all that you are men—the men of an old and glorious nation. Come to me with trust.

Newsreel clips of Pétain being hailed by a large and enthusiastic crowd (in the city of St. Étienne, a city not far from Le Chambon-sur-Lignon), children cheering.

NARRATION:

Elsewhere in occupied Europe, Nazi Germany had to impose henchmen to implement its policies.

Newsreel clip of large crowd singing the bloodthirsty end of the French national anthem: "*Qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons.*" ("May their impure blood drench our fields") People cheering. Cries of "*Vive le Maréchal!*"

Only in France did a local government choose to join in these policies—while retaining considerable public support.

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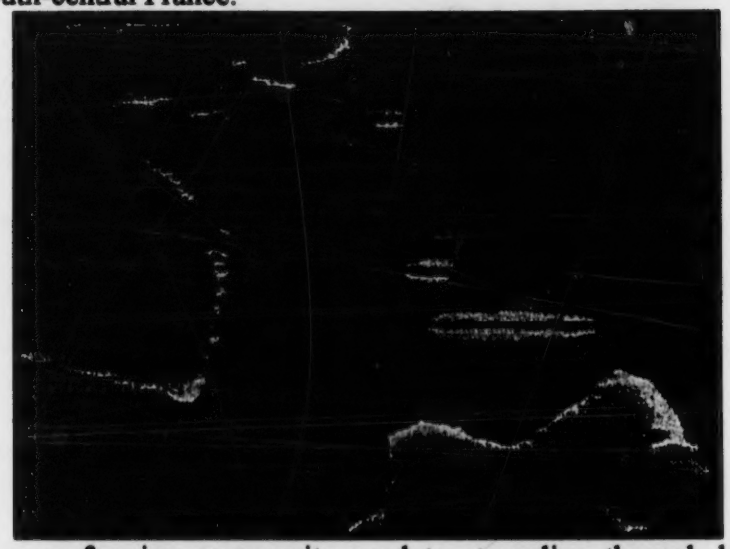
Le Chambon, less than 40 miles away, was in the initially unoccupied southern zone, 350 miles south of Paris. The village was part of an isolated plateau nestled in the mountains of south-central France.



This was a poor farming community used to struggling through long and rugged winters. These were hill people used to centuries of perseverance as a religious minority.

At the time of World War II, most of the peasants and villagers of the area were the descendants of Huguenots, the first Protestants in Catholic France.

Once, because of their beliefs, their temples had been destroyed, their rights abolished, their men deported to slave on galley, their women interned in towers where they left messages for future generations: "*Resist.*"

Once, itinerant preachers had risked their lives reading psalms from the Old Testament and identifying with the biblical journey to the Promised Land.

This period is known in Huguenot history as the "Desert." It lasted for a hundred years. While many Huguenots fled abroad, the people here clung to their land and their beliefs.

The old-timers of Le Chambon get together periodically to chat and play cards.
They still remember this old hymn to their ancestors.

CHARLES GIBERT:

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He sings *La Cévenole,* the old Huguenot hymn that will be heard or echoed throughout the film.

Hail beloved mountains,
sacred land of our grandparents.

NARRATION:

For the people of Le Chambon, the memory of their past was the very key to survival.

Nothing that occurred here during the war years was to seem entirely unfamiliar. And in every challenge there would be an echo of their forefathers' struggle and faith.

Faces of the old people dissolve to a color drawing of an 18th century Huguenot "assembly of the desert," showing people gathered attentively around their pastor.

CHARLES GIBERT (finishing the hymn):

May their spirit
inspire their children
to follow their example.

Shots of a village and a snowy plateau in the mountains.

NARRATION:

Joseph Atlas was a young Polish Jew living in France.

JOSEPH ATLAS:

At the age of 14, I suddenly found myself flanked by two *gendarmes* and put into the French internment camp of Gurs.

After several long months, I was then suddenly brought to Le Chambon-sur-Lignon without having any idea why I was being brought to Le Chambon-sur-Lignon. I suddenly found myself in a little house, surrounded by trees, in a village I knew nothing about.

The extraordinary thing about Le Chambon is that in the course of four or five years, nobody ever asked me the question: "Are you or are you not Jewish?" I was a young refugee, of Polish origin, being protected by a Protestant community.

NARRATION:

Hilde Hillebrand is a German Jew married since 1933 to Jean Hillebrand, a German Protestant. They arrived in Le Chambon after two and a half years in France's internment camps.

HILDE and JEAN HILLEBRAND:

MRS. HILDE HILLEBRAND:

They really did something. They risked their lives!

MR. JEAN HILLEBRAND:

They would hide us in their farms. They knew the *gendarmes* were nearby.

HILDE HILLEBRAND:

They would introduce us as relatives, as cousins.

JEAN HILLEBRAND:

They were in danger just like we were. They risked everything.

And you had accents, unmistakable accents.

JEAN HILLEBRAND:

Like we still do. [Laughs.]

HILDE HILLEBRAND:

You know what we would do? When neighbors would visit, I would say, "I'll go up and make the bed." I didn't stay in the room because of my accent. I didn't want to put them in danger. They were wonderful these people. We went back not long ago. They're like family.

JEAN HILLEBRAND:

We feel at home among them.

HILDE HILLEBRAND:

Oh yes, they were truly fantastic. No question about it. They risked their lives.

NARRATION:

At the turn of the century, Le Chambon had welcomed sickly working class children from the nearby cities. In the thirties, the village had taken in refugees from the Spanish Civil War.

In 1940, Madame Barraud was running a *pension*—a boarding home—for schoolchildren and summer visitors.

But guests in need were never turned away.

During the next four years, there would be many guests in need.

Dissolve from an old woman talking on camera to shots of her walking in a village street and arriving in front of a church. People greet her and each other as the bell rings for services.

GEORGETTE BARRAUD:

It all happened so naturally, we can't understand the fuss. It was all very simple.

I didn't have *that* many of them. Usually, they were just passing through. They would arrive sometimes at midnight or one in the morning—train schedules were very irregular. They would sleep on the floor. We would manage one way or another. The two of us often gave up our bed when there was absolutely nothing left.

I helped simply because they needed to be helped. The welcome here had a lot to do with people still believing in something. In the Bible, it is written to feed the hungry. To visit the sick. That is a normal thing to do.

Dissolve from the church to an old drawing of a Huguenot pastor speaking from an outdoor pulpit and then to photographs. Trumpet solo echoes the Huguenot dirge heard earlier.

NARRATION:

As in the days of the Desert, during the Nazi occupation the area found the spiritual leaders it needed—and deserved.

In 1934, Le Chambon had hired an independent-minded pastor determined to bear Christian witness. The late André Trocmé was a conscientious objector whose pacifist views had been extremely unpopular throughout France and within France's tiny Protestant community. André and Magda Trocmé, cosmopolitan city people, had found themselves relegated to this rather sleepy, backwater parish.

Just before the war, the Trocmés founded Le Chambon's first secondary school, and Trocmé brought in pastor Édouard Theis, a fellow pacifist, to run the school and serve as assistant pastor.

LESLEY MABER (in English):

Both Trocmé and Theis had a tremendous impact on all of us.

NARRATION:

Lesley Maber, an Englishwoman, moved to Le Chambon before the war. She was a schoolteacher there for thirty years.

LESLEY MABER (in English):

During the first year of the war, well, the only year, really, of the war, 1939-1940, they were very unpopular. They were a minority of two, saying that we shouldn't fight the Germans. And after the collapse of France, they were again a minority of two, saying we musn't collaborate with the Germans.

And they just went on their steadfast way. And people listened, people in Le Chambon listened to what they had to say and found that they agreed with them.

NARRATION:

Pastor Édouard Theis, assistant pastor of Le Chambon during the war:

PASTOR ÉDOUARD THEIS:

At the time of the armistice, the law professor and deputy from Lyon André Philip came to Le Chambon. And he said again and again, "What Pétain calls an honorable armistice is a *dishonorable* armistice because he has signed an agreement with Hitler promising to send back to Germany any refugees the Germans ask for."

So in Le Chambon we repeated that this was a dishonorable armistice. And for the Pétain government we had nothing but contempt!

> Camera follows somebody into the church. The inscription over the front door reads "Love One Another." As the camera enters the church, we dissolve to an old photograph of the inside of the church, with pastor talking from the pulpit

NARRATION:

France signed the armistice with Nazi Germany on June 22nd, 1940.

The next day was a Sunday. And that very morning, during services, the two pastors outlined the situation to their congregation.

The text of this historic document survives. Pastor Trocmé's daughter repeats the words of people who practiced what they preached.

Pan down a photograph of pastor Trocmé to the Bible he is holding in his hands.

ANDRÉ TROCMÉ

Voice of *Nelly Trocmé Hewett* (in English):

"The duty of Christians is to resist the violence that will be brought to bear on their consciences through the weapons of the spirit.

"We will resist whenever our adversaries will demand of us obedience contrary to the orders of the Gospel. We will do so without fear, but also without pride and without hate."[15]

NARRATION:

Magda Trocmé, widow of the pastor of Le Chambon during the war:

MAGDA TROCMÉ:

If we didn't obey Pétain or believe what the Germans were saying, it's not because we were smarter than anybody else but because of our pasts. I was from Italy and had seen the rise of fascism. My husband was half German—his mother was German. We had many German relatives. We had been to Germany often and we had seen the growth of Nazism. So we viewed what was going on not just from a Christian perspective but also from the perspective from our past.

NARRATION:

Nelly Trocmé Hewett, the Trocmés' daughter, remembers her parents during the war years in Le Chambon.

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[15] "Seul l'individu chrétien...peut offrir une résistance à l'état pur, une résistance sans compromis, une résistance dépouillée de toutes considérations tactiques, une résistance au nom des principes de l'Évangile. Il arrive même que la résistance du chrétien embarrasse et complique la résistance de son Église, parcequ'elle a un caractère intempestif et radical qui risque de compromettre les délicates négociations auxquelles les chefs responsables d'un groupe ne peuvent se dérober."

"La vérité découverte, il faut la publier, et c'est encore plus dangereux....Le privilège des pasteurs a été grand. Du haut de la chaire, calmement, au nom du Dieu vivant, ils ont pu parler....Il fallait parler et parler clairement. La tentation était grande d'envelopper d'images bibliques la vérité: comprenne qui pourra. On se calmait la conscience ainsi. Faux apaisement. Dieu aime qu'on enseigne l'Évangile clairement, avec l'adresse du destinataire écrite sur l'enveloppe. Le destinataire n'aimait pas cela."

André Trocmé, *La Résistance du Chrétien, fondement d'une reconstruction*, article non daté (1955?), peut-être non publié.

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NELLY TROCMÉ HEWETT (in English):

This background they had just gave them the support and the... richness of thought and character needed to implement the immense task that slowly built up around them and... which they had to accomplish. They couldn't give up. You don't give up in situations like that. You can't give up.

MAGDA TROCMÉ:

So in a way, we were prepared. And the village was prepared because of its Huguenot past.

Newsreel: Nazi official Reinhard Heydrich arriving in Paris, meeting with Vichy officials.

NARRATION:

By the spring of 1942, plans for the so-called "final solution of the Jewish question" were in effect, and during a visit to Paris, S.S. General Heydrich eased the way for large-scale deportations of Jews from France.

NEWSREEL continues:

The general met with officials of the French police and the French administration. He also met with the new director of Jewish Affairs.

The ending of the first sentence of the newsreel is present only in the English-language version; it is fully under the narration in the French-language version.

French documents on arrests of Jews. Photograph of young Jewish children wearing yellow stars. Photograph of Pétain playfully holding up a child with his cane, slowly zooming in on the tiny hands grasping the cane. Newsreel clips of Prime Minister Pierre Laval speaking to the camera and of Pétain greeting trains of prisoners of war.

NARRATION:

Mass arrests and mass deportations began in the summer of 1942.

Disappointed with the results of the roundups in Paris, the Germans put pressure on the French government to help them fill up the death trains. Marshal Pétain and Prime Minister Pierre Laval agreed to deliver Jews, foreign Jews especially but soon French Jews as well.

Laval even volunteered that it was better not to separate the families—and turned over Jewish children whom the Germans had not yet asked for.

The French policies of cooperation did not go unrewarded, and Marshal Pétain visited railroad stations—to greet returning French prisoners-of-war.

Clandestine snapshots (taken by American Tracy Strong, Jr.) of people lined up for deportation from Rivesaltes internment camp.

An American relief worker smuggled a camera into the internment camp of Rivesaltes in unoccupied southern France. He took these pictures of the beginning of a deportation to the north, and then to Auschwitz.

Montage of drawings of children in internment camps (by Georges Horan). Long pan over lists of trains from France to Auschwitz and other death camps, and then of names of deportees (documents compiled by Serge Klarsfeld). Montage of portraits of children who were murdered, ending with zoom-in on faces of a young boy and his sister. Maurice Ravel's "Kaddisch" resumes and ends.

In all, France was to contribute more than 75,000 Jews-including 10,000 children-to the nearly six million European Jews tortured and murdered by the Nazis. While the world stood by.

A youthful looking man in his early fifties is driving a car through the countryside.

Forty years later, Peter Feigl, now an American businessman, returns to Le Chambon.

He first came here as a 14 year-old, at a time when the rest of his family, Jewish refugees from Germany, were being deported to their death.

PETER FEIGL (in English):

During the war, there was all the apprehension of the unknown, of having been separated shortly before then from my parents and not knowing what... what was awaiting me at the next bend in the road. It was all quite scary then.

NARRATION:

After his parents had been arrested, Feigl had been rescued by Quaker and Jewish relief groups and brought to a children's home funded by American organizations.

He was later smuggled across the border into Switzerland, and took with him *these* mementos from his stay in *les Grillons*.

A series of passport-type photographs of children. Music: *Shalom Aleichem*, performed by klezmer clarinetist Giora Feidman.

PETER FEIGL (in English):

The friendship that I made with these fellow refugees there somehow meant enough to me to have kept those pictures despite very specific instructions not to carry anything on us.

Zoom in on handwriting on the back of a photograph: "Paul Fauvel = Paul Fogelman."

And I even went so far—very foolishly in retrospect—I went so far as to write down on the back of the photograph the *real* last name of the person, as well as the false name or the assumed name that they received at Le Chambon. Had I been caught with these photographs, that would have been curtains for me as well as for the other people involved.

Peter Feigl arrives at *les Grillons*, the children's home where he had been sheltered.

In a way, if you will, this is a... sort of a... homecoming. It brings back a flood of memories, many of them pleasant, many of them unpleasant. It evokes a feeling of gratitude, a gratitude that I can appreciate today and I wasn't even aware of when I was 14.

A couple in their seventies knock on a door and are greeted by a woman of the same age. They engage in small talk under the narration.

NARRATION:

Robert and Henriette Bloch, French Jews of Lyon, seventy-five miles away, periodically visit the Roussel family of Le Chambon.

Like other French Jews who arrived in Le Chambon at the beginning, the Blochs had mainly been escaping the hardships of city life during the Occupation.

Le Chambon was used to receiving visitors during the summer months. And in this time of severe rationing, in the country you could always find food on the black market.

ROBERT and HENRIETTE BLOCH (with MARGUERITE ROUSSEL):

ROBERT BLOCH:

In hindsight, I must admit that I lived almost like a fool, not changing my way of life or even my name.

I've lived with non-Jewish friends, and there never was any Jewish issue. As a young man, the problem simply didn't exist for me.

I just couldn't imagine what would be happening to us with Hitler's rise to power.

HENRIETTE BLOCH:

We French couldn't imagine... Maybe because we'd never suffered.

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NARRATION:

As the danger grew obvious, Madame Roussel and her family offered shelter to the Bloch family.

The Roussels are Catholics, then a tiny minority in Le Chambon.

MARGUERITE ROUSSEL (with ROBERT and HENRIETTE BLOCH):

What you must understand is that if the area remained peaceful, without denunciations or problems, it's because everybody basically had the same attitude. Even if we had different responsibilities.

We all felt affected by what was going on—it wasn't only the Jews. In 1940, when the Germans came in, all of us were threatened. So it was important to remain united. But none of this was obvious. We had no theories, for instance. It happened by itself.

An isolated farmhouse, with goats traipsing in the distance.

NARRATION:

Madeleine Dreyfus, a French Jew, joined l'O.S.E., a Jewish organization committed to rescuing Jewish children.[16] She would make the rounds of the farms on the Protestant plateau looking for hiding places for these children. Later deported herself, she survived Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

MADELEINE DREYFUS:

The farmers knew the children were Jewish. But we wouldn't *say it* to them. It was a way of protecting them not to say, "These children are Jewish."

The smaller ones were always easier to place. Small children are sweet and don't eat much and don't talk back. And we always had much more trouble placing the older kids.

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[16] I have always considered this line one of the most disturbing in the film, and remain surprised that no one has ever challenged me on it. How could any Jewish organization not be committed to rescuing Jewish children?

And I remember visiting a very elderly couple once when I was stuck with two 14-year old kids. And nobody wanted them. "They talk back. They're not easy to handle. They eat a lot." And I can remember saying, "The fact is that these two children are Jewish, that they are being hunted, and that their parents have been arrested."

And they said, "Why didn't you say so earlier?" And they took in my two kids.

Photographs of rural life in Le Chambon (to music of Élisa Trocmé's "Quatuor").

LESLEY MABER (in English):

The Jewish refugees, and other refugees, but especially the Jewish ones we had most, they could go to a farm, knock at the door and be received and kept. Now it was not the danger that the farmers would most have thought of, I'm sure, but the fact that they were poor. They're small farms here. And it meant sharing their daily bread. It meant giving food that otherwise they could have sold. They live very near to the bone. Very, very simply.

MADELEINE DREYFUS:

You preserved an unusual document from this period.

Yes, to my embarrassment. You're referring to this notebook. These kids that I would place all over, I couldn't remember everything!

There was what I had to bring on the next trip: laundry, bread tickets. These farmers would ask for very small amounts; they derived no profit. And there was also the list of farmers who had asked to take in children. A lot of people could have been arrested!

Here it is: Marion in La Suchère. Rochette in La Suchère. Fournier in La Souche. Véron in Romières. The Roussets in Le Robert. Valla in Le Robert. The Roustains in La Rionde. Mandon in La Bourghea.

Map of the area surrounding Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, with place names underscored. Montage of photos of temples of the area. Music of electronic organ (*L'Amitié* ["Friendship"], played by Auguste Bohny on the electronic organ) which began as Mme. Dreyfus recited list of names of farmers, continues under the following narration and under Magda Trocmé in the following section.

NARRATION:

Under the leadership of Pastor André Trocmé, the village of Le Chambon was the nerve center and the symbol of the spiritual resistance of the area.

But refugees were sheltered throughout this Protestant enclave, which stretched a dozen miles around Le Chambon in all directions and encompassed a dozen parishes.

The Protestant temples of the area and their pastors all played key roles in what happened here. But throughout the plateau and in Le Chambon itself, the *conspiracy of goodness* that developed was, in important respects, both individualistic and unspoken. It was, above all, a matter of one's own conscience

Magda Trocmé, widow of the pastor of Le Chambon during the war:

MAGDA TROCMÉ:

Each day, each individual did whatever they felt necessary.

I am often asked: "How were you organized?" But if we'd had an organization, we would have failed, of course! You can't make notes: today, I'm going to do this, tomorrow, I'm going to

do that. As difficulties appeared, each of us on his own did what they felt was appropriate. We didn't know what was taking place in people's homes. And people didn't know what *we* were doing. My husband certainly had an important influence—there's no question about that. But that doesn't mean he knew about everything.

It was a general consensus.

In the English-language version, the first two sentences are under the narration.

Montage of photographs of the life in the children's home, children playing lining up, playing, swimming. Music: cheerful new melody, *Faidoli*, played by Auguste Bohny on the electronic organ.

NARRATION:

A few outsiders too joined in the consensus.

Le Chambon already had many children's homes. It now became a village of children.

A Swiss relief agency for children successively set up three new homes in or near Le Chambon. At least a quarter of the children were Jewish, while others were being spared the food shortages and bombing raids of war-torn France.

In *la Guespy*, the first of these homes, most of the boarders were foreign Jews, many of whom had been gotten out of France's internment camps in the nick of time.

Under the direction of Auguste Bohny, a Swiss schoolteacher and conscientious objector, the three Swiss homes in Le Chambon became havens of song and study, peace and solidarity.

The local school today, dissolving into old photographs of school scenes.

Throughout occupied Europe, the Holocaust raged.

Here, Jewish and other refugee students swelled the enrollment at Le Chambon's new, private secondary school, soon known as the *Collège Cévenol*. There had been 18 students when the school had opened its doors in 1938; by 1943, there would be over 350.

It was an experimental school: Protestant, but inspired by internationalist and pacifist principles.

There was no school building at first, and classes were held in a dozen pensions throughout the community, with either the students or the teachers traipsing from one makeshift classroom to another.

The school's faculty included prominent professors from Paris, several of them Jewish.

Among the many Jewish students, the young refugee from Poland, Joseph Atlas:

JOSEPH ATLAS:

I started out virtually without any education and wound up with a degree in mathematics.

In my class, roughly 20 to 30 percent were Jewish. We never talked about it. You'd know somebody was Jewish more by their name than by anything else.

NARRATION:

Many young Jews joined the various boy scout and girl scout troops that flourished in the village and participated in the rescue effort.

Music: wartime jazz by Django Reinhardt.

NELLY TROCMÉ HEWETT (in English):

They didn't *blend* in; they were obviously foreigners. But the presence of foreigners didn't seem to affect us, the young people. They didn't blend in that they were noticed as foreigners—and we knew they were probably Jewish. But they were part of the community and part of the school just as we were.

NARRATION:

Among the French relief groups active in Le Chambon was the Cimade, a determined new organization of young Protestants—mainly women—which had been formed to help France's refugees.

While doing volunteer work in the internment camps, the Cimade was able to obtain the release of a group of refugees, and set them up in a pension near Le Chambon, the *Coteau Fleuri,* or "Flowery Hill." Other refugees followed.

As in American slavery days, an underground railroad was soon put into operation, with the *Coteau Fleuri* also becoming the starting point for the Cimade's busy escape route leading to neutral Switzerland 200 miles away.

Forty years later, Pastor Marc Donadille, one of the Cimade's relief workers in Le Chambon, revisits the *Coteau Fleuri.*

Music: Trumpet solo variation on the 133rd psalm (Élisa Trocmé).

Pastor MARC DONADILLE:

Is this how you remember it?

What I remember is what doesn't seem to exist. It seems to me that there was a terrace where we would gather when the weather was nice or in the evening. We would talk about life, about believing in God, about not believing in God. They would tell me of their misfortunes, their fears, their hopes.

And in the evening, we'd have services together. That was difficult because maybe as many as half of them were Jewish. As a Protestant pastor, I tried not to offend anyone. So we would read from the Old Testament. We'd sing psalms.

The Jews felt close to us because of our roots in the Old Testament. And we felt close to them because they *were* the people of the Old Testament. For us Protestants, it is the Prophets

who nourish our faith—and our conduct. And this was especially clear then in the struggle against Nazism.

An old woman working in her garden.

MARIE BROTTES (voice-over):

One Sunday during services in Tence, the pastor knocked on the door and said, "Three Old Testaments have arrived." And we knew that "Old Testament" meant Jew.

One of the Brethren[17] got up, an old Christian, and he said, "I'll take them."

And he took them to his farm in the middle of a meadow. And he hid them.

The old woman climbs out of the garden on a ladder, holding a staff-like rake.

NARRATION:

Among the most welcoming to the Jews were the area's many Christian fundamentalists, who did not recognize the authority of the clergy and sought to live, as best they could, according to scripture.

Marie Brottes is one of these Christians.

MARIE BROTTES:

For you, these were human beings, the Jews who were asking for your help. But they were also Jews.

They were Jews, of course.

That was important?

That was very important. And even if they didn't really accept the Gospel, that's for sure, even if they remained very Jewish or maybe not much of anything, we still did what we could because they were the People of God. That is what mattered.

Montage of photographs of Mme. Brottes and her husband, and of some of the Jews they helped.

NARRATION:

Marie and Léon Brottes themselves found food and shelter for a stream of refugees.

MARIE BROTTES:

You can't talk of faith if you do not act. Eat, drink, satisfy your appetite. But if you give nothing to your brother, you're a wretched soul. And the neighbor you must love as yourself is in

17

the street. We mustn't act like the priest who saw the man who had fallen among thieves and who passed by on the other side. And the Jew, truly, had fallen among thieves.

Newsreel clip of an official striding into a large crowd of lined-up children and addressing them from a podium.

NARRATION:

The Vichy government appointed a cabinet-level Minister for Youth, Georges Lamirand, who traveled throughout France addressing large audiences of young people.

GEORGES LAMIRAND (old newsreel):

The Marshal has already stated several times what he means by his Social Revolution. He has the passionate desire, he has the obstinate will to bring more happiness to France.

Newsreel continues under the following narration.

NARRATION:

By August 1942, there was probably no community in France more defiantly opposed to the Vichy government than the village of Le Chambon.

And in August 1942, it was to Le Chambon, of all places, that the Vichy government proceeded to send Minister for Youth Georges Lamirand.

GEORGES LAMIRAND (contemporary):

I had been told: "It's Protestant. It's very Protestant." That didn't matter to me.

You didn't know that there were Jewish refugees in Le Chambon...

I didn't know it yet.

...and that the village had already virtually embarked on a mission of protecting Jews against...

No, I knew nothing about that. But I learned it during my visit.

In the English-language version, the first two sentences are under the narration.

Montage of photographs of Georges Lamirand's official visit to Le Chambon.

NARRATION:

The village ignored the government delegation as it made its way through empty streets.

Standing next to the Vichy official whose responsibilities encompassed the area of Le Chambon, Lamirand gave a brief speech in the sports field, near the cemetery. He finished with the usual cry of "Long live Marshal Pétain!"

The dead silence that followed was interrupted when a Salvation Army official responded with the cry, "Long live Jesus Christ!"

And the village's position was spelled out later that day when a group of Le Chambon's young people approached the Minister for Youth and handed him a letter, which they asked him to read immediately.

The letter referred to the roundups of Jews in Paris a few weeks earlier by French police, then went on to indicate that the young people of Le Chambon refused to make distinctions between Jews and non-Jews, and would seek to hide any Jews the French government attempted to identify or deport.

GEORGES LAMIRAND:

They were asking me to intervene. To which I replied: I understand your concern, but these are measures for which I have no responsibility. Next to me is the prefect, I don't remember his name.

Bach.

Bach, that's right. A nice man, very energetic. He's the one you should be speaking to.

In the English-language version, the first sentence till "arriver" is under the narration

NARRATION:

And this was not the only time that the people of Le Chambon communicated their state of mind to the Vichy officials.

As the Vichy minister recalls, the pastor had insisted that he attend services.

GEORGES LAMIRAND:

This was the first time in my life that I was visiting a Protestant temple. And the dear pastor handed me his hymnal, asking me to join in. Which I did, although I sing very poorly.

NARRATION:

Among the people making a point of attending services that day: Marie Brottes.

MARIE BROTTES:

There was a very good moment. The temple was full. And when they told us to sing *La Cévenole*, that hymn to the persecuted: "From what local granite was made this victorious people..." We sang it. And if they had lined us up against a wall, we were ready to face the machine guns.

OLD-TIMERS:

Gathered around their card-tables, they sing *La Cévenole*, the Huguenot hymn heard earlier.

May their spirit

inspire their children
to follow their example

MARIE BROTTES:

So he wasn't too happy, that prefect. Or Monsieur Lamirand. But we did it, and they left, as the saying goes, with their tails between their legs.

GEORGES LAMIRAND:

As for the... well, as for the Jews who were there, I thought that was just fine. And I can even tell you that when I left, and shook hands with a number of people, I could easily tell who among them was Jewish. And I have no sense of pride about this, but I shook their hands with very special warmth.

Mr. Lamirand, I'm a Jew. Close to 80,000 Jews of France were taken by the Germans, or handed over to the Germans, by the French police, the French gendarmes, *the French administration, as a result of instructions given by colleagues of yours.*

What do you say now to the families of all these people?

Allow me to correct you. I gave no such instructions.

I'm not talking about your own staff. I'm talking about the government of which you were a part.

Oh, that...

When you visited Le Chambon, twenty trains had already left for the East, as they would say: 20,000 people...

I knew nothing about that. It's horrible, but you see, I knew nothing about it. If I had known, I probably wouldn't have hesitated to address the problem in Le Chambon. Mind you, it wasn't really up to me to do so, it was up to the prefect. But I would have done it anyway, no doubt about it.

As I said before, some of my best friends are Jews.

NARRATION:

A few weeks after the visit by the Vichy officials, the peace of Le Chambon was interrupted one Saturday afternoon by the sudden arrival of French police—with empty buses.

Pastor Trocmé was instructed to provide a list of the Jews living in Le Chambon and to ask them to come in to "register" at City Hall.

Though threatened with arrest, Trocmé flatly refused, saying that it was not the role of the shepherd to denounce his flock.[18]

A poster went up warning that anyone harboring foreigners without declaring them would be subject to heavy fines and arrest.

18-"Il y a cependant un devoir chrétien plus haut que celui de dire la vérité. Nous l'avons appris lentement. Il a fallu passer du clairon à la sourdine, parceque le clairon risquait d'envoyer à la mort des innocents. Pour sauver ceux qui se cachaient, il a fallu apprendre à agir en cachette. Tournant difficile à prendre. Mais il fallait choisir. Ou bien prêcher sur les toits, et alors il fallait se débarrasser du juif sous votre toit, le passer en hâte à un voisin plus discret, qui s'empresserait de le passer plus loin encore, toujours plus loin; ou bien il fallait appeler le juif sous votre toit, rassembler de partout les persécutés, vers vous, et s'en rendre volontairement solidaire, participer à ses terreurs, à sa fausse carte d'identité, à ses risques, à ses humiliations, à sa mort. La Justice de Dieu dit: la valeur est dans le prochain. C'etait à prendre ou à laisser. Mieux valait être moins prophète et moins saint et un peu plus frère. On est objecteur de conscience, non pour garder les mains pures, mais parcequ'on pense un peu à l'autre, dont Dieu nous a fait le gardien."

André Trocmé, *La Résistance du Chrétien, fondement d'une reconstruction*, article non daté (1955?), peut-être non publié.

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But this letter reported that although Vichy authorities had also threatened Le Chambon with reduction of its food rations, "resistance continues."

Music: Second, somewhat dissonant variation on the 133rd psalm, trumpet and percussion (Élisa Trocmé).

There had been special concern at the *Coteau Fleuri,* the Cimade home for refugees from the internment camps.

Here were gathered together many foreign Jews known *by name* to the French authorities.

PASTOR MARC DONADILLE:

A lieutenant appears, looking not very proud of himself.

I said, "We have nothing to hide. This isn't a prison. People do what they want."

So they start going through the house. First room: nobody. Second room: nobody. There was nobody anywhere. Hiding places had been provided by the whole population.

Then we went to see Mrs. Bormann. This Mrs. Bormann insisted she was related to Martin Bormann, the Nazi leader! She had stayed in her room. They said, "But she's on our list."

When we entered the room, she was in the middle of an extraordinary epileptic convulsion—really very impressive.

I said, "You see what condition she's in." The *gendarmes* said, "Oh, if she's sick, we'll call the doctor. No question about it. We can't take a sick person."

So the doctor came, did his examination, and said, "She can't be moved, no question about it."

And the *gendarmes* seemed quite relieved. In fact, one of them said to me later, "I've just come in from over there. What's happening is horrible. What they're making us do is... I'm going crazy."

NARRATION:

Elsewhere in the so-called "free zone," ten thousand Jews *were* rounded up that summer by the French police and handed over to the Germans for deportation.

In the area of Le Chambon, the Vichy *gendarmes* lingered for three weeks, long enough, perhaps, to lose all willingness to perform their dirty job.

They captured one Austrian half-Jew—who was later released.

Newsreel clips of Germans crossing the demarcation line (with blaring newsreel music), Hitler smugly swaggering under a swastika at a Nazi rally.

At first, Le Chambon's defiance had been of its own government. But in November 1942, after the Allies landed in North Africa, the German army swept across France's demarcation line and occupied the southern zone.

The people of Le Chambon and their Jewish friends were now directly under the Nazi swastika.

Le Chambon is in the *département*—or district—of Haute-Loire.

Map of the district of Haute-Loire, indicating the presence of German forces in the *département* capital of Le Puy, panning the short distance from Le Puy to Le Chambon-sur-Lignon.

By that time, the Free French resistance movement had begun to spread within France. It took root thirty miles from the German headquarters for the district.

While gearing up for the anticipated battle of liberation, the resistance was careful not to provoke any tragic reprisals.

Pierre Fayol, a French Jew, became one of the leaders of the French Resistance in the district of Haute-Loire.

PIERRE FAYOL:

When my wife looked for a place where I could go when the Gestapo was after me, she went to a farm and they said, "Have him come here. No problem." This was of course enormously helpful to us. Everybody was involved.

Oh, there were two or three exceptions we called... collaborators. But in fact, they weren't very nasty collaborators, because if they had been, things would certainly have turned out much worse.

Music: instrumental version of *Zog nit keyn mol* (Song of the Partisans).

NARRATION:

The area of Le Chambon also harbored distinct groups of Jewish freedom fighters, whose ranks swelled on week-ends as young people gathered together and learned to handle rifles from refugee veterans of the Spanish Civil War.

A Lithuanian Jew played a key role in organizing this resistance, running a network which brought many Jews to the area. He later participated with his unit in the battle for liberation.

In the woods of Le Chambon during the Nazi occupation, you could hear songs of Jewish defiance. And you could dance the horah.

Music: *Zog nit keyn mol* (Song of the Partisans) ends.

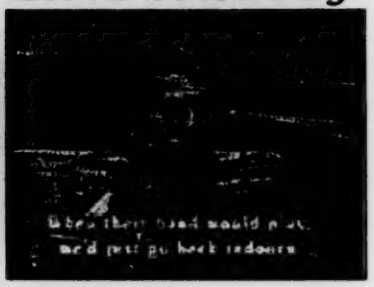
The Germans came to Le Chambon!

The German army took over two hotels in the middle of the village for soldiers convalescing from the Russian front.

The Germans set up their headquarters right opposite the headquarters of the armed resistance in Le Chambon, the pension of the late Léon and Antoinette Eyraud.

Their daughter and her husband, Aline and Adolphe Caritey, still live in her parents' old home.

ADOLPHE and ALINE CARITEY:



ADOLPHE CARITEY:

The back door of the house was always open. Often, we didn't even know who was sleeping in the house.

And the front door was within view of the hotel where the Germans were convalescing.

Yes.

But the Germans must have been aware of what was going on here? From their windows they could see...

ALINE CARITEY:

I don't think so and in any event I'm not sure that they were very interested. They were convalescing and were probably quite happy to have peace here. As long as we didn't bother them.

People were cold, but not unpleasant with them. When their band would perform on the main square, we'd just go back indoors. [Laughs.]

Music: wartime German military band.

NARRATION:

But did those German soldiers realize that the area had become a haven of refuge for the Jews?

Roger Bonfils, himself part-German, was the owner of the hotel that was requisitioned by the Germans as their headquarters in Le Chambon. He stayed on as hotel keeper.

ROGER BONFILS:

The German soldiers who were in the hotel, in the afternoon they would go for walks. They would then say to me, "*Es gibt viele Juden hier*"—"This place is full of Jews."

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I would say, "No, they're just tourists from Valence or St. Étienne." [Laughs.] They would look at me and laugh and go off.

Newsreel report (obviously postwar) on the martyred village of Oradour-sur-Glane.

NARRATION:

Elsewhere, the German occupation of France was no laughing matter.

Towards the end of the war, one French village was burned to the ground in a military reprisal against the Resistance, its men shot, its women and children herded into the church where they were machine-gunned and set on fire.

How is it that the village's name was Oradour-sur-Glane and not Le Chambon-sur-Lignon?

How is it that the S.S. and the Gestapo paid so little attention to what was going on here?

Almost till the end of the war, the commanding officer for the district was Major Julius Schmäling of the Wehrmacht.

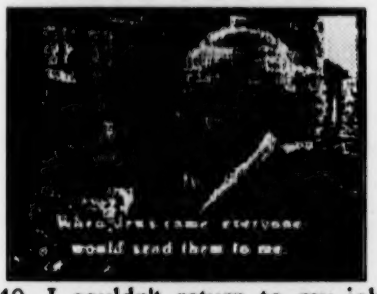
Could it be, as the evidence suggests, that he too knew full well that Le Chambon was full of Jews—and steered his fellow Germans elsewhere?

Could it be that you just never know who might get caught up in a conspiracy of goodness once you launch it?

And those German soldiers in Le Chambon didn't have far to go to spot Jews. They were right next door.

Émile Sèches, nephew of the chief rabbi of Lyon, recalls:

ÉMILE SÈCHES:



After military service in 1940, I couldn't return to my job since I was a Jew: I was an insurance salesman, and it was now forbidden for us to visit customers.

I had three children, and since my wife was a very good cook, we thought of opening up a *pension* for children in Le Chambon. I'm from nearby St. Étienne, so I'd known of Le Chambon for years. We thought we'd come here for two years, or until the war ended. We ended up staying here 32 years. That's life.

When the Jews arrived, the villagers would say, "Why not go to Monsieur Sèches? It'll be easier for you to give your false name since he too is Jewish."

As a result, we filled up immediately.

Montage of photographs of groups of children in Émile Sèches' *pension*. Music: *Shalom Aleichem* (ctd.) performed by Giora Feidman.

NARRATION:

And so, with German soldiers living next door, a Jew in Nazi-occupied Europe spent the war years watching over a children's home full of Jewish children. Who have since raised families of their own.

Zoom-in on a (false) identity card, followed by newsreel clips of German soldiers checking I.D.s., and a montage of false papers. Music: wartime jazz by Django Reinhardt.

False identity cards, false ration cards were essential for life in hiding under the Nazi occupation.

Le Chambon became a center for the manufacture and distribution of false papers.

For in the fall of 1942, a teenager had arrived with some very useful skills: he had learned to become a forger.

Born Oskar Rosowsky, he is remembered in the village as Jean-Claude Plunne. Rosowsky is now a family doctor.

OSKAR ROSOWSKY:

What I brought was a technique. I was assigned the task of creating what amounted to a false papers department—there was enough work for two. Our production of false papers regularly amounted to papers for fifty people a week. We would spend our days making the false papers and our nights distributing them.

NARRATION:

All this took place in what was then the home of Henri and Emma Héritier.

The Héritiers are peasants. Both their families have lived in the area of Le Chambon for generations. During the Nazi occupation, they shared their home with Jewish refugees. They didn't know that one of then would involve them in one of the most highly punishable of crimes.

EMMA and HENRI HÉRITIER:

When did you realize he was making false papers?

HENRI HÉRITIER:

Very soon, because he told me he had some things to hide. We were careful. We couldn't just leave the papers lying around. There might be some search. The Germans were in Le Chambon.

So what did you do?

We put them in my beehives, in the woods. And when they needed the material, they would just go over there and get it.

Was it difficult? You had to reach into the hives?

Yes, but there were no bees in those hives. [Laughs.]

And weren't you concerned about all this?

EMMA HÉRITIER:

No. We never had any problems. Nobody ever asked any questions.

And did you know he was Jewish?

HENRI HÉRITIER:

Yes. He hadn't mentioned it, but we'd realized it.

EMMA HÉRITIER:

We never talked about it.

NARRATION:

Paul Majola, then a very young shepherd, helped in the distribution of the false papers.

He worked closely with a farmer, here posing with one of the many refugee families to whom the farmer provided assistance.

PAUL MAJOLA:

Did you know what you were distributing?

Not the first two times. Then Monsieur Bouix[19] told me it was for refugees, for people who were being hunted and really needed to hide.

He said that to you, a little boy? He must have trusted you?

Yes, he had complete trust in me. That's what he told me.

What impression did these refugees make on you at the time?

A really sad one. Most of them were really lost. There were a few who felt a little more secure and who came here mainly to get papers. But others were absolutely lost. Without money, without anything.

Paul Majola making a path through the shrubbery near the farm.

NARRATION:

At first, the false papers, here too, were stored in the farmer's beehives.

[19] Jean Bouix.

PAUL MAJOLA:

And then he didn't feel secure about the beehives, so we would bury them in his mother's grave. In a plain little box, covered with earth.

NARRATION:

During this time, the Vichy authorities did not completely ignore the growing nest of Jews in Le Chambon. They sent a policeman, a young Protestant named Léopold Praly, to live and work right in the village.

Émile Sèches was among those summoned to Praly's office on the main square.

ÉMILE SÈCHES:

He phoned me one day and said, "Monsieur Sèches, I have lists. How come you haven't registered as a Jew?"

I said, "I didn't register because the whole village knows I'm Jewish, I'm just about the only Jew in Le Chambon." I meant the only *declared* Jew. There were, of course, many others who weren't declared...

He said, "It doesn't matter. You have to come in and register." And he put the word "Jew" in very large letters on my food ration card, my identity card.

This created a real problem for me for visiting my family in St. Étienne. I had to have false papers made.

NARRATION:

Police inspector Praly would regularly leave his hotel right opposite the railroad station and walk down the street to the post office to mail his reports to the French authorities.

These reports have not been preserved. But how is it that they did not lead to a single effective Vichy raid against the Jews in Le Chambon—even against the children in Émile Sèches' Jewish pension?

And how is it that the Vichy policeman thought nothing of posing happily for photographs alongside his girlfriend—and foreign Jews staying in his hotel, the hotel where he was gunned down one day after lunch, by Resistance fighters from outside the area.

Government documents reveal that the Vichy authorities *did* nail down that the distribution of false papers was going on in Le Chambon, and that the village had become a key starting point for illegal border crossings into Switzerland.

Yet somehow the activity kept on growing, as Jews continued to pour into the area till the very end of the war.

OSKAR ROSOWSKY:

How many Jewish refugees do you think there may have been in Le Chambon during the war?

Actually, I think I may be virtually the only person in a position to make such an estimate, since we dealt with almost everything having to do with the transformation of the identities of the Jews, and also of the political refugees and of the Resistance fighters.

I would estimate that some 5,000 Jews were hidden in the area.

An average of one per local inhabitant. One family per family of farmers.

Montage of photographs of a Jewish family's life on a farm. Music: *Shalom Aleichem* (ctd. and end) performed by Giora Feidman.

NARRATION:

The urban Coblentz family from Strasbourg *became* farmers.

Their pig was named Adolf...

For some refugees, life in the area of Le Chambon during the war was to have important fringe benefits.

On the main square of Le Chambon's sister village of Le Mazet, Madame Ruel's café was the local headquarters of the French Resistance, while in her home, she resisted the war on the Jews.

One of the Jews she took in was a Frenchman, who during his stay met a young Jewish woman from Germany, who had also sought refuge in the area with her parents.

They are now Monsieur and Madame André and Ginette Weil.

GINETTE and ANDRÉ WEIL:

MRS. GINETTE WEIL:

We met there, yes.

MR. ANDRÉ WEIL:

Thanks to these dramatic circumstances...

How did you meet?

GINETTE WEIL:

I think my husband needed money. He must have had a treasury bond, and he didn't want to cash it in where he was hiding...

ANDRÉ WEIL:

I couldn't—it had to be at the post office. I went to Tence.

GINETTE WEIL:

Because you knew you could get cake on the black market—all butter.

ANDRÉ WEIL:

My future wife was there. And that's where we met.

GINETTE WEIL:

It was at the post office.

ANDRÉ WEIL:

And since earlier I'd met Monsieur André... I don't know his real name. but [to his wife] you do.

GINETTE WEIL:

There was a big snowstorm that day...

ANDRÉ WEIL:

And he'd said, If you run in to any families, tell them to hide.

I took an interest in the family, let us say...

Photograph of a youthful and attractive Ginette Weil.

A close interest?

ANDRÉ WEIL:

A close interest. [Laughs.][20]

Were you scared during that period?

GINETTE WEIL:

Very scared! Very scared!

We were in assigned housing. We then hid. We came back. We hid again. I can't even talk about it. My parents didn't speak French. I lost a brother when we came to France. My parents were traumatized—they were never able to learn French.

We were very scared.

NARRATION:

Ginette Weil and her parents were offered sanctuary by a sharecropper and his family, who already had other Jews living in the farmhouse.

GINETTE WEIL:

Madame Chareyron said to us: "You know, for us this is normal. God is sending us these... these events so that we may have contact with God's Chosen People. We are very happy to be able to do this—to be able to hide you."

Madame Chareyron and her family were really happy to have us. It was extraordinary.

NARRATION:

Some Jews remained virtually in hiding throughout their stay in the area of Le Chambon. Others derived a sense of security from passing as gentiles—or imagining they were passing as gentiles.

A few were Orthodox Jews.

20

Mme. Marguerite Kohn and her family kept kosher throughout their stay in the area. She remembers her equally committed Christian neighbors.

MARGUERITE KOHN:

It happened that one day I was invited by a family to attend Protestant services. I didn't refuse. They knew that I was attending as a Jew.

The peasants were very pleased that I attended these services, but I explained to them that I would not be coming regularly, as these services did not meet my own needs. And they understood completely. They were always extremely kind with me and with my children. My youngest children attended a one-room schoolhouse, with one teacher. They wouldn't go to classes on Saturdays. And nobody ever made any comments about it, neither the teacher not the parents. They knew we were observant Jews.

And they respected your faith?

They respected it greatly.

We were always afraid of being caught by the Germans. And when I left the area in December 1944, I was still hoping that my husband would come back. He died in the gas chambers on January 25, 1944. But I learned that much later.

A brother was also deported in 1943, a father of three children. A sister-in-law was deported in January 1944 with four children and her husband. Cousins I felt very close to, who were deported with their husbands and children. Aunts. Uncles. A large part of my family.

How many came back?

None.

Newsreel clips of Marshal Pétain entering the basilica in Le Puy, crossing himself.

NARRATION:

The Holocaust occurred in the heart of Christian Europe, and would not have been possible without the apathy or complicity of most Christians, and without the virulent tradition of antisemitism that had long infested the very soul of Christianity.

The balcony of a house (formerly the children's home *la Guespy*), dissolving to an old photograph of the same balcony, with people on it.

And yet here, under the Nazi occupation, Jewish religious services were held during the High Holy Days and Chanukah—with the help of devout Christians.

Zoom-in on a headline in the wartime parish newspaper: "*L'Hospitalité, conte de Noël,* par André Trocmé" ("Hospitality, a Christmas tale, by André Trocmé"). Montage of photographs.

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Loving your neighbor, for the people of Le Chambon, was not taking advantage of the circumstances to seek conversions. But surely there were some conversions connected to the wartime spirit of Le Chambon? Yes, there were.

This young man came to Le Chambon with his parents, who taught in the Swiss-run children's homes. In the winter of 1944, he delivered a lecture to Christian relief workers in Le Chambon. His talk was entitled "The bankruptcy of Christianity."

Born Fernand Blanc, that son of Christians became Jerusalem's Abraham Livni, an Orthodox Jew.

Pastor Édouard Theis, assistant pastor of Le Chambon during the war.

Pastor ÉDOUARD THEIS:

And if you had to summarize the Christian faith in one sentence...

Well, Jesus did that: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself!"

That's the summary.

That's it?

Yes.

And it was simply necessary to apply it at the time?

Yes.

CHOIR:

A group of ordinary-looking people rehearse a hymn (psalm 104, *Dieu des Louanges)* in a church).

Dieu des louanges sois béni.
Tu es la source de l'amour.
Et tu es le même aujourd'hui,
Hier et demain et pour toujours.

Hymn continues under the narration

NARRATION:

The local parish paper, April 1943: *"The lord is a refuge for his people, a shelter for the Children of Israel."*

June 1943: *"The kingdom of God is founded not on words but on deeds."*

August 1943: *"He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"*

November 1943: *"One must obey God rather than men."*

In the English-language version, the preceding narration is over the choir singing in the background. In the French-language version, the choir sings full up and there is no narration.

- "L'Éternel est un refuge pour son peuple, un abri pour les enfants d'Israel". Joel 3/16 (N.B. En réalité, Joel 4:16.)
- "Le Royaume de Dieu ne se fonde pas avec des paroles mais des actes". 1 Corin. 4/20.
- "Celui qui n'aime pas son frère qu'il voit ne peut aimer Dieu qu'il ne voit pas". Jean 4/20.
- "Il faut obéir à Dieu plutôt qu'aux hommes". Actes 5/29.

CHOIR (finishes the hymn):

"Tu es l'espoir, tu es la joie,
Même en silence ou dans la nuit;
Donne le pain, donne la paix,
L'amour de ce que tu promets."

LESLEY MABER:

The Christian faith here was a crucial component of what was happening.

It was indeed. It was indeed.

It was not a sentimental faith. It was not something extraordinary. It was a very solid faith, that was put to the test and was not found wanting.

An old door on an empty street, panning up the street. Music: the dirge-like lament heard earlier, this time in a vocal version.[21]

MUSIC:

Let us now sing the story of Monsieur Désubas...

NARRATION:

This old lament is of unknown popular origin. It tells the story of one of the Huguenot martyrs of the area of Le Chambon.

Dissolve to wartime photograph of the entrance to the presbytery. Dissolve to photograph of the pastor and his wife.

And one snowy evening in early 1943, it appeared that the age of martyrs was about to resume for the Protestants of Le Chambon too.

This time it was not yet another hopeful refugee knocking on the pastor's door. It was the Vichy police.

MUSIC (ctd.):

The officer asks him, "Tell me, sir,
Are you a minister of the Protestant Christians?
Do you preach the Gospel in these parts?"

---

[21] *Complainte sur la mort de M. Désubas*, Élisa Trocmé-revised version, sung by Catherine Perrier, with violin accompaniment by John Wright.

"Yes, I am indeed a minister..."

NARRATION:

They took André Trocmé away, as the people of Le Chambon gathered to bid good-bye to their pastor.

MUSIC (ctd.):

"If God Almighty summons, I will obey.
And endure death if necessary in the name of his Son."

NARRATION:

Also arrested were assistant pastor Édouard Theis—and Roger Darcissac, the director of the boys' public school

ROGER DARCISSAC:

When I would enroll a student, I'd sometimes be told, "He's a Jew." I'd say, "Okay. So?"

I'd enroll him under whatever name I was given. Sometimes it wouldn't be his real name. Sometimes it would.

And if you'd been asked who was Jewish in your school, would you have reported it.

No. And they *did* ask me and I said, "None."

Music: the Huguenot dirge resumes and continues under narration.

NARRATION:

It was just a few months before his arrest that Roger Darcissac published this lament.

He included a message in Morse code—under the horses. It deplored the presence of the Gestapo and its French accomplices.

MUSIC (end):

Photograph: Trocmé, Theis, and Darcissac

How sad and forever mournful
To see these doves
In the hands of vultures.

NARRATION:

Another message, this one in German, proclaimed: "For them that love God, all things will work together for good."

The three friends were placed in an internment camp for Communists and other political prisoners.

But their arrest lasted only one month, and they were released shortly before most of the other inmates were deported to their death.

And it turns out that the rebels had found an unlikely ally in the Vichy administration: the local prefect himself, Robert Bach, the official who had accompanied Minister for Youth Georges Lamirand on that disastrous visit to Le Chambon the previous summer.

Official documents.

This report reveals that Bach vigorously urged the release of the three Chambonnais, even lying that the village had been *won over* to the Vichy policies as a result of the Minister's visit.

It also turns out that Bach under-reported the number of Jews living in Le Chambon and throughout the district of Haute-Loire, going so far as to state that the total number of refugees was, in his words, "relatively minimal."

The Prefect knew about some of the refugees. He'd paid a private visit to the Swiss homes of Le Chambon.

Newsreel clips of French prefects swearing allegiance to Pétain with fascist-like salute.

Robert Bach had sworn to serve faithfully the new French regime and its leader. Why was he so inefficient in executing the antisemitic law of the land?

Was he influenced by his contacts with André Trocmé and the people of Le Chambon?

Or was it enough for him merely to remember that he too was a descendant of the persecuted Huguenots?

Interior of the church in Le Chambon. An organist plays the psalm heard earlier sung by the choir. People (including the old lady we saw arriving) leave the temple at the end of services.

Shortly after his release from internment camp and his return to Le Chambon, André Trocmé yielded to pressure from the Protestant hierarchy and went into hiding, while Édouard Theis joined the workers of the Cimade, escorting refugees to the Swiss border.

Roger Darcissac and the people of Le Chambon continued doing what came naturally.

ROGER DARCISSAC:

It happened quite simply, without any problems.

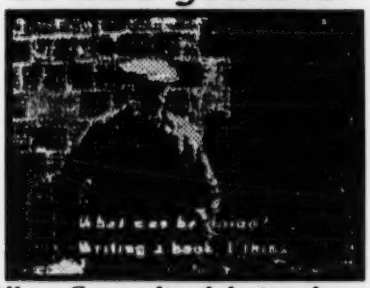
We didn't ask ourselves questions about what we were doing. It was the human thing to do, something like that.

That's all I can tell you...

NARRATION:

It was also during those years that a young Frenchman who had come to the area of Le Chambon for his health began to write a new novel.

ÉMILE GRAND:



Excuse-me, isn't this where Albert Camus lived during the war?

Yes.

Where exactly?

There. That middle window.

Did you know him then?

Oh, yes.

What was he doing?

He was working on a book, I think. And he would go for walks.

NARRATION:

The book became *The Plague,* Albert Camus' allegorical novel inspired by those times.

In words that could have been written about the people he would encounter during his walks, Camus has his narrator say this:

"For those of our townspeople who were then risking their lives, the decision they had to make was simply whether or not they were in the midst of a plague and whether or not it was necessary to struggle against it.

The essential thing was to save the largest possible number of people from dying. The only way to do this was to fight the plague. There was nothing admirable about this attitude; it was merely logical."

And the plague did reach into Le Chambon one summer morning in 1943. The Gestapo arrived undetected at this home for older male students that had been set up under American Christian supervision.

Here, before the Nazi raid, some young men had actually pursued graduate studies. But on that day, two dozen youths were beaten, insulted and deported.

Deported with them was the pastor's cousin, Daniel Trocmé, who had been running both this home and *les Grillons,* the American-funded home for young children.

DANIEL TROCMÉ

He had been warned that he was a target for a raid and that he should go into hiding. But Daniel Trocmé had not come to Le Chambon to hide.

He had no interest in religious dogma and great wariness about all narrow religious beliefs. But the work going on in Le Chambon meant something to him, as he had explained to his parents in a letter written less than a year before his arrest:

"I think it may be time for me to assume responsibilities with regard to other people.

"Le Chambon is something of a contribution to the reconstruction of our world. The future will tell me whether I was equal to the task or not, and it will tell only me because it is not a matter of success in the eyes of the world.

"I have chosen Le Chambon because I will thus be able not to be ashamed of myself."

Daniel Trocmé died on April 2nd, 1944 in Maidanek extermination camp.

To the end, his murderers found it difficult to believe that he *wasn't* a Jew.

The filmmaker standing in the ruins of a farmhouse.

I was born a week before Daniel Trocmé died. A few months later, Le Chambon had its second martyr: he was the doctor who had delivered me.

ROGER LE FORESTIER

Montage of photographs, one dissolving into the other, of a young boy maturing into a man.

Roger Le Forestier had come here after a year in Africa working in Albert Schweitzer's hospital. He was 36 years old and a committed Christian. He had been among the very first to begin organizing full-scale nonviolent resistance to Vichy and the Nazis.

Shortly after my birth, Le Forestier made an ill-fated trip to the nearby city of Le Puy, German headquarters for the district. Assigned to a work detail in Germany, he found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time in Lyon on August 20, 1944.

On that day, Nazi thug Klaus Barbie, the "butcher of Lyon," ordered and possibly led the bloody slaughter of 119 resistance fighters and one non-violent resister from Le Chambon.

Roger Le Forestier's body was among those piled in a heap and set on fire.

Newsreel clips of Pétain being acclaimed in a long motorcade (through Lyon) and being cheered by crowds as he arrives in St. Étienne.

Throughout France, many caring people helped and sheltered Jews from the Nazis and their accomplices.

And throughout occupied Europe, a tiny minority of kindred spirits—mostly unbeknownst to each other and still mostly unknown to us—risked their lives to become their brothers' keepers.

But much of France, till the end, acclaimed the leader it deserved.

This was June 7th 1944, the day after France learned that the Allies had at last landed on French soil.

In the district of Haute-Loire, the Germans surrendered to the French Resistance, and Le Chambon was liberated long before the first Allied units rumbled through the village.

But then, Le Chambon had never ceased to be free.

With the war over, the Jews left. And the Chambonnais, who hadn't talked much about their visitors while they were there, don't appear to have talked much about them after they left.

With a few loyal exceptions, the Jews even appeared to have forgotten their benefactors.

JOSEPH ATLAS:

I have something important to say to them.

When Le Chambon-sur-Lignon was liberated by the First French Army, I lived through this liberation in Le Chambon. The Jews left. And as for me, after pursuing my studies I left for South America.

I forgot Le Chambon. I forgot it deliberately, because I was emerging from a nightmare.

The Chambonnais may have been hurt by that. They may have thought that we didn't fully appreciate their hospitality. Such was not the case; their hospitality had remained very close to my heart.

But it was necessary for me to absorb, understand and surmount the tragedy that the Jewish people had lived through.

The filmmaker climbing the steps to a nondescript house, ringing the doorbell.

22

NARRATION:

It took *me* a long time to find my way back to Le Chambon too.

I returned to understand what had happened here, but also to learn about my beginnings.

My parents had not remained in contact with the peasants from whom they had rented a room in a farmhouse. But I was determined to find Monsieur and Madame Roche.

And the very last day of shooting in Le Chambon, I found myself climbing the steps to their daughter's home in a neighboring town.

Her father, Élie Roche, had died a number of years ago. But now I was going to meet Madame Léa Roche for the first time as an adult.

LÉA ROCHE and PIERRE SAUVAGE:

PIERRE SAUVAGE:

Madame Roche? I'm happy to find you.

LÉA ROCHE:

You know, I think I recognize you a little.

PIERRE SAUVAGE:

Then you're recognizing a little baby. [They laugh.]

Dissolve to them seated at a table, as he points to some old photos.

LÉA ROCHE and PIERRE SAUVAGE:

PIERRE SAUVAGE:

That's my father and that's my mother.

Under following narration:

NARRATION:

Madame Roche didn't seem to remember the Sauvage family very well at first, except that we were very nice, she said.

Her daughter, however, had often wondered about the baby with whom she used to play.

Évelyne Verilhac, Mme. Roche's daughter, comes into the room and identifies a photo.

ÉVELYNE VERILHAC, LÉA ROCHE, and PIERRE SAUVAGE:

ÉVELYNE VERILHAC:

Yes, that's me.

I'm telling you, a few months ago, I thought about you. Sometimes I think of places where I have lived, things like that. And I thought, I wonder what happened to those people?

LÉA ROCHE:

It's a coincidence.

ÉVELYNE VERILHAC:

Yes.

PIERRE SAUVAGE:

[Laughs.]

LÉA ROCHE:

Yes, a coincidence.

In the French-language version, the first two sentences are under the narration.

NARRATION:

I now visit the Roche family whenever I return to Le Chambon. They have come to mean something to me. For me, they are now part of the story too, as are the couple who lived up the road from us, Henri and Emma Héritier.

The Héritiers' daughter Éva had helped take care of me. It was in the Héritier home that my parents had followed developments in the war on the radio broadcasts of the BBC.

HENRI et EMMA HÉRITIER; PIERRE SAUVAGE:

HENRI HÉRITIER:

They often came by here.

EMMA HÉRITIER:

Your father would go for food, carrying his knapsack.

And then when they left, when it was over...

PIERRE SAUVAGE:

They took your daughter.

EMMA HÉRITIER:

They took Éva with them. They went to St. Étienne.

PIERRE SAUVAGE:

So there was this Jewish baby in La Fayolle.

EMMA HÉRITIER:

Who is now Pierre. [Laughs.]

HENRI HÉRITIER:

He didn't stay very long in La Fayolle.

EMMA HÉRITIER:

You were born in St. Agrève, but you were from Le Chambon. So you're a Chambonnais. [Laughs.]

And then in the summer, Éva came up with you. We had moved to the farm. That's where you learned to walk. [Laughs.]

Monsieur and Madame Héritier are seen walking around their old, now abandoned farm. Madame Héritier peering in the window.

NARRATION:

I still cannot fully explain my deep sense of loss when I learned that Madame Héritier had passed away.

Perhaps it was all in the letter that her daughter Éva sent me on behalf of the family a few days later:

"Our ray of sunshine has disappeared behind a thick black cloud. But we still have her soft and pretty smile that will remain forever present with us and will help us to surmount the challenges of life.

"Papa Héritier was very shaken, but he displayed limitless courage for a man of almost 84 separated from his companion after 62 years of life together. He gave us an unforgettable example of wisdom.

Dissolve from the faces of the Héritiers to the old photo of the couple used for title sequence: they stand together in front of the farm smiling at the camera. Music: instrumental echo of *La Cévenole,* the Huguenot hymn sung by the old-timers.

We his children are proud of having and having had parents such as them. May we be able to resemble them if only a little bit, may we become the reflection of their image."

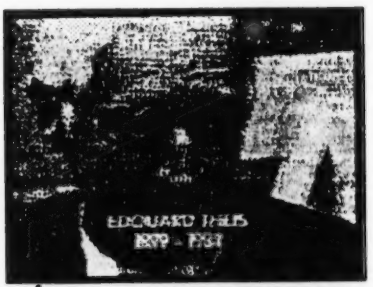
Dissolve to a large plaque with a Hebrew and French inscription, on an outside wall.

From a plaque placed by Jews in a Christian village in France: "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

Dissolve to successive freeze frames and titles of the following people:

GEORGETTE BARRAUD
(1893-1984)

MAGDA TROCMÉ[23]



ÉDOUARD THEIS
(1899-1984)

MARGUERITE ROUSSEL[24]

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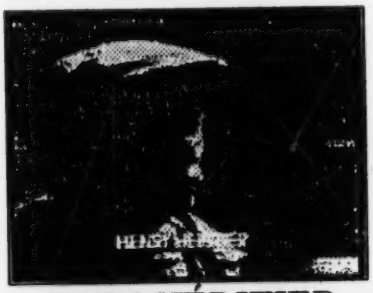
23
24

MARIE BROTTES[25]

ROGER DARCISSAC
(1893-1982)



HENRI HÉRITIER[26]

25
26

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EMMA HÉRITIER
(1903-1984)

Music: Vivaldi concerto heard at beginning, orchestral version.

But the questions linger:

Why, when the world cared so little, did a few people care so much?

And how is it that in a time of unparalleled violence, the weapons of the spirit here were triumphant?

The steam-engine train is seen going off in the distance. P.O.V. views of the countryside. Vivaldi concerto, orchestral version, swells and ends.

LESLEY MABER (in English):

Humanity is fundamentally good, with the possibility to become fundamentally bad. And there's choice.

It doesn't mean that bad people are all bad and good people are all good. It doesn't mean that in Le Chambon there are no people with faults and failings. It's a community like any other community.

And I think that means that any community anywhere has the choice to make and can choose right.

And that people who seem very ordinary people can do great things if they're given the opportunity.

Fade to black. Fade up on screen credits, over group of old-timers seen earlier.

The old man who early on sang *La Cévenole*, is seen sitting among his fellow old-timers as he checks for the right side of his harmonica, then launches into a cheerful dance tune, a *bourrée*. As credits continue, he volunteers to sing the song in the local dialect, launching into it to the merriment of the old-timers, who spontaneously join in.

CHARLES GIBERT:

Que say ve-nia doun fa
Garçous de la mountagno?
Que say ve-nia doun fa
Chi vou-lia pas dan-sa?
Say tcha-lia pas vegny,

Garçous de la mountagno,
Say tcha-lio pas ve-gny
Chi vou-lia mè diur-mi.

Fade to black. Credits continue to unfold as we hear *La Cévenole* for the last time, performed on the electronic organ by Auguste Bohny.

On the two hour television special, the film credits follow the interview of Pierre Sauvage by Bill Moyers.

"WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT" SCREEN CREDITS

produced, written and directed
by
PIERRE SAUVAGE

co-producer
BARBARA M. RUBIN

editor
MATTHEW HARRISON

director of photography
YVES DAHAN

production sound
PATRICK BAROZ

post-production supervisor
DOMINIQUE OREN

assistant camera
PATRICK BÉRAUX

gaffer
PHILIPPE BARILLET

assistant director
YANN FAUVERGUE

historical consultant
FRED KUPFERMAN

sound editors
MATTHEW HARRISON, DOMINIQUE OREN

assistant sound editor
DENISE DAVIS

apprentice editor
JENNIFER BAUM

negative cutter
JOY RENCHER

sound mixer
MICHAEL McKAY, CINEMAX

additional photography
JACOB ELEASARI

motion picture titles
PACIFIC TITLE

calligraphy
ROBERT V. WILLIAMS

stills copying courtesy of
DUPLICATE PHOTO LABORATORIES

legal counsel, Friends of Le Chambon
GORDON B. CUTLER, Esq., MAUPIN, CUTLER, TEPLINSKY & WHITE

legal counsel, First Run Features arbitration
THOMAS C. LAMBERT, Esq.

color timers
WALTER ROSE, JAMES C. CARTER

telecine operator
WENDELL WILLIAMS

color by
FOTO-KEM

Original music

CHARLES GIBERT, harmonica and vocal

LA CÉVENOLE
Bourrée

***

ÉPHÉMÈRE COLLECTIVE PRODUCTION
ÉLISA TROCMÉ, Musical Coordinator

Psalm 133 (*Coteau Fleuri*)
QUATUOR (farms)
COMPLAINTE SUR LA MORT DE MONSIEUR DÉSUBAS
sung by CATHERINE PERRIER, violin accompaniment by JOHN WRIGHT
and additional music

***

AUGUSTE BOHNY, electronic organ

COMPLAINTE SUR LA MORT DE MONSIEUR DÉSUBAS (Huguenots)
AMITIÉ (Protestant plateau)
FAÏDOLI (Swiss children's homes)
LA CÉVENOLE (screen credits)

***

CERCLE FAMILIAL

LA CÉVENOLE

***

LYDIE BENQUET, organ

Psalm 104, *DIEU DES LOUANGES* (temple)

***

ECUMENICAL CHOIR TENCE/LE CHAMBON-SUR-LIGNON
Brother DANIEL BOURGUET, Musical Director

Psalm 104, *DIEU DES LOUANGES* (choir)

***

TED ASHFORD, synthesizer

LA CÉVENOLE (Héritiers)

Recorded music

ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678 - 1741)

CONCERTO IN C MAJOR FOR TWO MANDOLINS (F. XII, NO. 37)

THE GERMAN STRING ORCHESTRA
SIEGFRIED BEHREND, Conductor
COURTESY OF BASF RECORDS/CBS MASTERWORKS

I SOLISTI VENETI
CLAUDIO SCIMONE, Conductor
COURTESY OF ERATO RECORDS/MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY

***

DJANGO REINHARDT (1910 - 1953)

STOCKHOLM, 1940 (Nazi occupation of France)
NYMPHÉAS, 1942 (Pétain and Hitler)
SWING 42, 1941 (Collège Cévenol)
CAVALERIE, 1943 (false papers)

DJANGO'S MUSIC
QUINTETTE DU HOT CLUB DE FRANCE
COURTESY OF PATHÉ MARCONI/EMI

***

MAURICE RAVEL (1875 - 1937)

KADDISCH, 1914 (Holocaust)

Orchestrated by CHARLES GERHARDT; LYDIA MORDKOVITCH, violin
NATIONAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, CHARLES GERHARDT, Conductor
COURTESY OF RCA

***

SHALOM ALEICHEM
(Peter Feigl, Sèches pension, Coblentz family)
(traditional)

performed by GIORA FEIDMAN (clarinet)
accompanied by AMI FRENKEL & YOSSI LEVI
COURTESY OF HED-ARZI LTD., ISRAEL

***

ZOG NIT KEYN MOL (Jewish resistance)
(HIRSH GLICK, DMITRI POKRASS)

performed by MOSHE LEISER (vocal & guitar)
with AMI FLAMMER & GÉRARD BARREAUX
COURTESY OF HARMONIA MUNDI

***

WIR FUHREN AUF DAS MEER HINAUS
(German soldiers)

Photographs and documents

RUDY APPEL
Madame ASTIER
JOSEPH ATLAS
ÉRIC BARBEZAT
GEORGETTE BARRAUD
HENRI-PIERRE BASS
HANS BEUTLER
NICOLE BEYDON
SIMONE BLANC
HENRIETTE / ROBERT BLOCH
AUGUSTE BOHNY
LILY BOIT-RUSSIER
ROGER BONFILS
MARIE BROTTES
FRED BUCH
ALINE / ADOLPHE CARITEY
RÉGINE LEHMANN
FRANÇOISE LEVY-COBLENTZ
JACK LEWIN
HANNE / MAX LIEBMANN
LESLEY MABER
PAUL MAJOLA
Madame MARION
HUBERT MEYER
KURT MULLNER
ERWIN NEU
ERMINE ORSI
PIERRE PITON
ANTONIO PLAZAS
Madame POINGT
LÉA ROCHE
OSKAR ROSOWSKY

LUCIEN COTTE
DANIEL CURTET
MARC DARCISSAC
ROGER DARCISSAC
SIMONE DOISE
MARC DONADILLE
MADELEINE DREYFUS
ANDRÉ DUMAS
YVETTE DUTOUR
PIERRE FAYOL
JEAN-ÉTIENNE FALLEK
PETER FEIGL
MARTA FEUCHTWANGER
ANNETTE RILEY FRY
BERNARD GALLAND
JOSEPH GODEFRYD
MICHÈLE GOETSCHEL
ÉDITH GRANDOUILLER
EGON GRUENHUT
HENRI GUILHOT
PHILIP HALLIE
EMMA / HENRI HÉRITIER
NELLY TROCMÉ HEWETT
HILDE / JEAN HILLEBRAND
MARGUERITE KOHN
WILTRUDE LAVELLE
DANIELLE LE FORESTIER
MARGUERITE ROUSSEL
RENÉE RUSSIER
BERNARD SADOUN
HANS SALOMON
ILSE / LOUIS SALOMON
PIERRE SAUVAGE
NICHOLAS SCHAPIRA
LAURA SCHLEIGH
WALTER SCHMÄLING
HOWARD SCHOMER
SOLANGE / ÉMILE SÈCHES
SERGE SOBELMAN
ÉVA SOULLIER
CLAUDE SPIERO
CLAUDE STRAUSS
TRACY STRONG
ÉDOUARD THEIS
LOUISE THEIS
CHARLES TROCMÉ
MAGDA TROCMÉ
PAUL TROCMÉ
ÉVELYNE VERILHAC
MARC VERILHAC
BARBARA VORMEIER
GINETTE / ANDRÉ WEIL
MARCEL WEILL
Monsieur ZERAPHA

FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON (Los Angeles)

SOCIÉTÉ D'HISTOIRE DE LA MONTAGNE (Le Chambon-sur-Lignon)

AMIS DU MUSÉE DU CAMP DE GURS
ARCHIVES NATIONALES
ARCHIVES ROGER-VIOLLET
BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE
CIMADE
COLLÈGE CÉVENOL
DIRECTION DES STATUTS ET DE L'INFORMATION HISTORIQUE
FILS ET FILLES DES DÉPORTÉS JUIFS DE FRANCE
FONDATION BEATE KLARSFELD
SERGE KLARSFELD, *MÉMORIAL DE LA DÉPORTATION DES JUIFS DE FRANCE*
MUSÉE DU DÉSERT
PRÉFECTURE DE LA HAUTE-LOIRE

SOCIÉTÉ DE L'HISTOIRE DU PROTESTANTISME FRANCAIS
SWARTHMORE COLLEGE PEACE COLLECTION (U.S.A.)

Drawings and maps

TERRY ANDERSON, France

SAMUEL BASTIDE, *PAGES D'HISTOIRE PROTESTANTE*, Huguenots

FRANZ MEYER, Himmler and Jewish refugees,

GEORGES HORAN, Internment and deportation

GÉRARD COMBES, Resistance in Haute-Loire

Newsreels

CINÉMATHÈQUE DES ACTUALITÉS FRANÇAISES
(INSTITUT NATIONAL DE L'AUDIOVISUEL)

ÉTABLISSEMENT CINÉMATOGRAPHIQUE ET PHOTOGRAPHIQUE DES ARMÉES

Production and P.B.S. Underwriting

FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON

PIERRE SAUVAGE PRODUCTIONS [now Greenvalley Productions]

GRAND MARNIER FOUNDATION
[P.B.S. Underwriting, Dec. 12, 1990 and March 23, 1992]

HELENA RUBINSTEIN FOUNDATION

JOSEPH AND REBECCA MEYERHOFF MEMORIAL TRUST
[P.B.S. Underwriting, Dec. 12, 1990]

F.R. 3

ANONYMOUS SURVIVOR OF THE HOLOCAUST
ATLANTIC RICHFIELD FOUNDATION
HORACE W. GOLDSMITH FOUNDATION
DAVID EVERETT FOUNDATION

JEWISH COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (Los Angeles)
DONALD E. SIMON FOUNDATION
UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF B'NAI B'RITH
THALIA AND MICHAEL C. CARLOS FOUNDATION
STANLEY W. W. / SHERIDAN KESSELMAN
THE TEMPLE (Atlanta)
NEW YORK FRIENDS GROUP [P.B.S. Underwriting, Dec. 12, 1990]]
GUESS, Inc. [P.B.S. Underwriting, Dec. 12, 1990]

LUCY ANN ALBERT
JOSEPH ATLAS
LOIS H. BLUM
ABE / JULIETTE DEUTSCHER
MELVIN DUBIN
TED / BARBARA FLICKER
HAROLD / LINDA FRIEDMAN
ELIZABETH HIRSH
STANLEY HIRSH
LeROY E. HOFFERBERGER
WILLIAM P. / BETTY HOGOBOOM
HAROLD./.ELIZABETH HOROWITZ
NAT KAMENY
Madame RENÉ MAYER
NORMA PISAR
LÉON SAS
MARTIN / HELEN SCHWARTZ
SERGE SOBELMAN
DAVID / LILLIAN ZERNER
LUCIEN ZINGER

ATARI CORPORATION
CHURCHES AND SYNAGOGUES OF MONTCLAIR, N.J.
THE 1939 CLUB
SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER
MEYER STEINBERG FOUNDATION

MEMBERS OF FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON

Special thanks

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CHARLES BAILEY
ÉRIC BARBEZAT
MADELEINE BAROT
LAWRENCE C. BERSHON
GÉRARD BOLLON
DAVID BRANDES
MARY CULLEN
KAREN DOSS
Pastor ANDRÉ DUMAS
HENRY / EDITH EVERETT
Dr. HENRY L. FEINGOLD
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KEN HERTZ
CHARLES HIGHAM
ARTHUR HILLER
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MITCHELL LEIB
CATHERINE DELAPRÉE LINCOLN
LESLEY MABER
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JACQUES OTMEZGUINE
SAMUEL / JUDITH PISAR
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ÉDOUARD RUEL
ROGER RUEL
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Rabbi HAROLD M. SCHULWEIS
JEAN-MARIE SOUTOU
Rabbi ALVIN M. SUGARMAN
ROY V. / NIUTA TITUS
ÉLISA TROCMÉ
LUCIENNE VERILHAC

ELIE WIESEL

and DAVID SAUVAGE (1980 -)
without whom this film would not have been made

BILL MOYERS' TELEVISION INTRODUCTION OF *"WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT"*

Hello, I'm Bill Moyers.

Imagine that the United States has been conquered militarily by a vicious, oppressive foreign power.

Imagine that U.S. officials, under occupation, decide not to resist the foreign power but to do its bidding. And imagine that the foreign power has a consuming, murderous hatred for a particular segment of our population—say, the Jews, or blacks or Christians—and is bent on eliminating them altogether.

Imagine that Americans compliantly join in, singling out these men, women and children for persecution, and then agree to turn them over to be deported to parts unknown, with obvious evil intent.

Imagine what you, imagine what I, would do if something like this were to occur. Would we stand idly by, pretending it wasn't happening, or rationalizing that, Well, this doesn't really concern us anyway. Or would we be willing to put our lives on the line if necessary, and that of our families, because, well, because that's just the sort of person we are.

The French, during the Nazi occupation of their country during World War II, were faced with just such choices and responsibilities.

Throughout occupied Europe, individuals, families and nations had to decide whether they were indeed their brothers' keepers. Many, unfortunately, demonstrated that they were not.

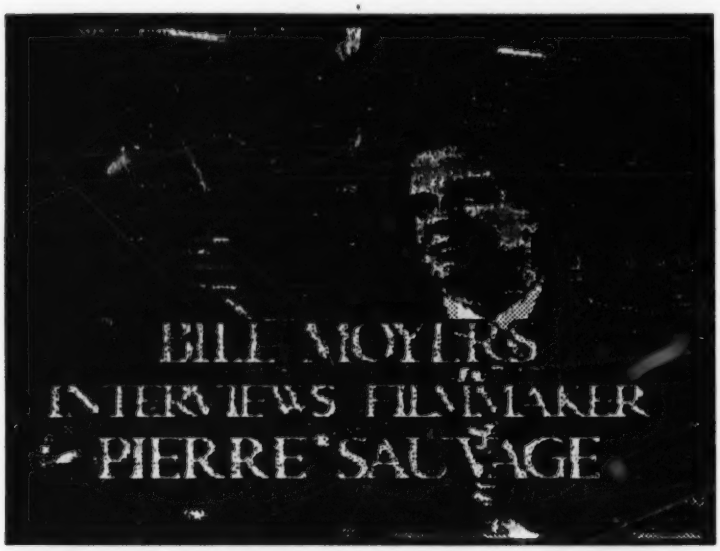
Weapons of the Spirit, the film we're about to see, tells the story of a whole community that made the right moral choice. Most important, it reminds us that that moral choice remains the individual's to make.

As the film aptly recalls, many Christians still have to face the magnitude of their failure during the Holocaust. To do so, they have to be able to measure what it was possible to do, what is was possible for even an entire community to do.

Those are the issues that are illuminated by this film. I hope you've gathered your family around to experience this documentary, and that you will stay afterwards to join me in meeting the man who produced it. His name is Pierre Sauvage, and his story—the story of the film and the story behind the film--is one I think you will long remember.

The film raises a lot of questions—Pierre intended that it would—and we'll probe some of them when we come back later in this broadcast. We'll also explore his own personal story.

And now, *Weapons of the Spirit*.



"BILL MOYERS INTERVIEWS FILMMAKER PIERRE SAUVAGE"

MOYERS: How old were you when you set out to make this film?

SAUVAGE: Well, let's see. I guess I was in my mid-thirties. A long time ago...

MOYERS: A long time ago metaphorically?

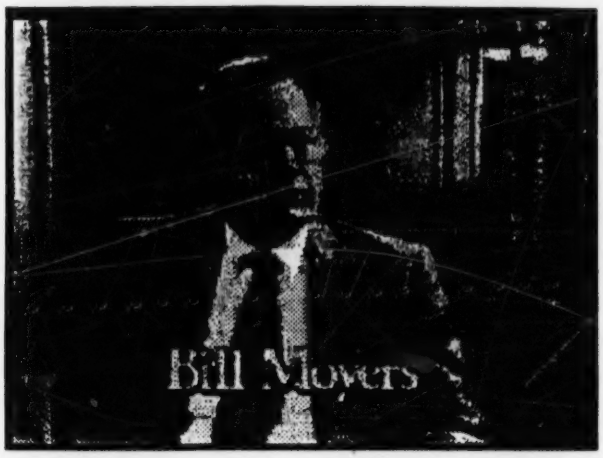
SAUVAGE: Yes, that too, that too.
Oh, it's almost hard to justify having spent that much time making this film except that making the film was a quest for understanding where I came from, who I was, what life meant, what I was going to pass on to my kids.
All that sounds awfully pompous, but I think it really amounted to that. And the project took hold of me and I just had to bring it to completion.

MOYERS: You grew up in New York. Did you hear growing up about Le Chambon? Did your parents constantly refer to it, make you mindful of that part of your story?

SAUVAGE: Well, I guess the answer to that is perhaps a big paradox about the making of the film. The answer is no, my parents did not talk much about Le Chambon. Oh, I knew I was born there. But I didn't know that Le Chambon had mattered in any particular way.
They basically were people who had put the past behind them to the extent of not even allowing me to know that they were Jewish and that I was Jewish.

MOYERS: They didn't tell you?

SAUVAGE: They did not tell me. Till I was 18.



MOYERS: You were 18? Nothing in the home had indicated this, nothing in the conversation had indicated this, nothing in your own intuition had indicated this?

SAUVAGE: You know when you were raised under a taboo, the power of that taboo is extraordinary. People sometimes can't believe that I could have not suspected or known. But the truth is I did not. I did not.

It may not be meaningless that the film was not the work of a dutiful child fulfilling his parents' fondest wishes. It was the work of a rebellious child, laying a claim to a part of the past, indeed to a heritage, indeed to an identity that he had essentially been deprived of.

MOYERS: In what sense, rebellion?

SAUVAGE: Well, the mere fact of becoming Jewish was a rebellion. I was sort of sent forth into the world as a "nothing." I wasn't a Christian, I was simply a "nothing."

That satisfied me for quite a while, by the way. I was a student in Paris and it never bothered me. It took a long time for me to start measuring that that was not a productive way to live your life. I think two major influences—one, my wife, who is Jewish, and who sort of was working on me—a lot.

And the other, actually, was Le Chambon. Because I realized that a lot of what they did came out of their strong sense of self, their intimate knowledge of who they were, of what their history was. And I realized that, well, if they were getting such strength from being who they are, then I had to aspire to be who I was.

MOYERS: When you went back and said, I'm going to do a film, how did they respond?

SAUVAGE: They were wary. They were certainly uncomfortable that I might do what filmmakers do, which is to dramatize their story, to sentimentalize them in some way, to make heroes out of them. They genuinely don't feel that they were heroes.

Incidentally, the biggest mistake one could make is to sort of chalk this off to some form of modesty or, God forbid, false modesty. They think they simply did what was natural, what came naturally to them.

MOYERS: Somehow when I look at those people in Le Chambon, however, I'm not surprised that they did what they did. Were you?

SAUVAGE: I'm maybe less surprised than I was when I started out on this. I mean, it started to make sense to me. Whenever I learn something new about them, some minor facet that I stumble across, some anecdote that somebody tells me, it always seems to fit in. And I realize that there's truth there. There's something to be learned.

I had to undo a lot of preconceived notions in order to come to this, the most fundamental one, I think, being one that's been handed down by the dramatists and the novelists and the artists, to an extent. The very process of that is to build around conflict and tension and drama, and they've sort of passed on the notion that good people, people who put their lives on the line, people who take major risks, are people who agonize over their decision, spend sleepless nights worrying about what they're going to do, and then maybe in the morning, because their conscience tells them to—but even the conscience has a raspy, nasty edge to the sound of its voice—finally do the right thing.
I've come to believe this is nonsense, that people who agonize don't act, people who act don't agonize.

MOYERS: How exceptional do you think they were? I mean, there were other rescuers in Europe. Were these people exceptional?

SAUVAGE: Well, the rescuers in Nazi-occupied Europe almost by definition were exceptional because there were few of them. The vast majority of people were not murderers, they were simply apathetic. They simply did not rise to the challenge. They ducked the issues somehow.
Of course the film was a quest to understand in what ways Le Chambon was both special and very ordinary.

MOYERS: What made it special?

SAUVAGE: I think what made it special was an extraordinary confluence of circumstances and people. A singular group of people with a singular history: this Huguenot stock, this memory of their persecution—not only the fact that they had a history of persecution but that they remembered it, that it mattered to them.

MOYERS: How do you think this influenced their openness toward you and the others who were sheltered?

SAUVAGE: Well, I think on the one hand, there was that sense of identification with somebody else who was persecuted. On the other, there was their particular slant on their Christian faith which both mandated deeds—that was essential—but also involved a certain, special kinship with the Jews.

MOYERS: Through persecution, through...

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SAUVAGE: Well, even broader than that. Simply because the Jews, for many of the Christians of the area, were the People of the Book. These were Christians whose sense of roots went that far back that they were comfortable with the Jewish roots of their faith.
On the other hand, one shouldn't overstate how exceptional or unusual they were, and distance ourselves from them in the process. They were, in very fundamental ways, no different from you and me, very ordinary people with simply a good hold on what is important.

MOYERS: But they were different from other Christians, down the road, around the corner, across the border, who either collaborated actively or, as you indicated earlier, stood by frightened or indifferently while thousands of people were rounded up and shipped off to death. What particular influence did their faith have on them? How *Christian* were they?

SAUVAGE: You know, I think the most fundamental paradox of this issue of Christian rescuers during the Holocaust, it seems to me, is that Christians facing that period have no choice but to face up to the enormity of Christian responsibility. Not that Christians were behind the murders—certainly they weren't behind the murders as Christians. But that it happened in the heart of what could be called Christian Europe and that Christians allowed it to happen.
And yet, when you look at those who resisted, when you look at those who recognized what was at stake, it is my contention that when you probe these people, the Christian influences on their conduct become very clear.
I think maybe it's a question for Christians to answer, "How Christian were they?" Maybe they were not typical Christians, but I would like to believe they were certainly exemplary Christians.

MOYERS: Two things struck me about them as I watched the film. One was their serenity. There just seemed to be such an inner stillness, a powerful inner stillness, and it reflected in their posture toward each other, toward you, toward the world. Serenity.
And the second was a sense of, well, for lack of a better term, self-esteem, whatever that is.

SAUVAGE: You know, the psychological dimension of the film is the least explicit. The most explicit one is probably the historical and the religious; things are defined. Psychology is just embedded in it. But I think it's a crucial component. Somehow these people were raised with, yes, that healthy sense of self-esteem.

MOYERS: What was the source of it?

SAUVAGE: I haven't done the research into their upbringing. I think respect for one's parents and ancestors is certainly a very important component of it.
I'm sometimes surprised that people who argue for religion don't make this purely sort of psychological, pragmatic argument that we are, in large part, who we were, who our ancestors were. That's programmed into us. And psychology rightly believes that you derive strength from knowing who you are.
Well, knowing who you are is also connecting with your spiritual heritage. Not necessarily adopting it. Not necessarily embracing it. Learn about it and see what happens.

MOYERS: When your film was shown at a convention of the American Psychiatric Association it got a standing ovation, didn't it?

SAUVAGE: Yes. I was very proud of that actually.

MOYERS: Why, do you think? What did they see in it that caused them to rise in applause?

SAUVAGE: I think it was the mental health that shines through from these people. These people sort of exude that sense of mental health, and I think the recognition mattered to these professionals.
I thought of a line that a relative of mine said about them, which is one of my absolute favorite lines. She had come to Le Chambon when I was there, and I introduced her to Madame Brottes. (Madame Brottes is the woman defined as the fundamentalist Christian, with the white hair, raking the garden.)
And my cousin Lizzie hugged Madame Brottes, and my cousin was crying. And I said to her afterwards, "Lizzie, you were really very moved."
And she said, "Yes, it was like hugging a tree."
There is that inescapable sense of solidity that emanates from them. Of course, a tree has roots, and that's a crucial part of it.

MOYERS: And it has real texture, unlike the goodness we so often talk about, you know: ephemeral, sentimental, saccharine, self-serving. There is a reality to these people that is not unlike the tree that is there.

SAUVAGE: That's right.
You know, the other striking dimension about it is that all this was so effortless. I mean, life to me and...

MOYERS: You mean what they did was effortless?

SAUVAGE: What they did. I live in Los Angeles. To anybody who lives in a big city, life seems difficult. Rearranging your car pool is a big production. And these were people who took in two, three strangers, had their whole routine disrupted. But it was... natural.
They don't look upon effort as being something depleting. They look upon effort as something through which you live fully and you derive strength. It's really quite different.
And of course people like them exist all around us.

MOYERS: Do you find people like the people of Le Chambon in your regular, ordinary world now?

SAUVAGE: I think so.
Oh, I've gone so far as to say—and this is probably a fairly bold assertion—that if there were another Holocaust, and if they were going after the Jews again, and I was again targeted, that I probably would have a better sense of whose door to knock on than the average person. That there is something you can learn. You can develop a sense about certain attributes that are likely to produce this sort of conduct.
I also know that there are certain places that I would be more likely to go.

MOYERS: We meet a lot of women in this film. Is that just a coincidence?

SAUVAGE: You know, it was women who often played the key role in rescue. It was the woman who'd often be opening the door of the house. The men might be away, might be at war or might be tilling the field. It was often the woman who made the decision as to whether that needy refugee would be taken in.
And I have no doubt that women played a very important role in this. Maybe that's one reason that the activity itself has been comparatively under-recognized.

MOYERS: Because?

SAUVAGE: Because men don't resonate to these things as readily. We boys are more interested in guns and battles—even when they produce no important result—than indeed in the weapons of the spirit.

MOYERS: At the opening of the broadcast I asked the audience to imagine that the United States had been occupied. Now you imagine. What do you think *you* would do if we were occupied, and you were called upon to shelter to rescue the other?

SAUVAGE: I don't know. And I don't think we ever know. I would never dream of presenting myself as a model of somebody who would know enough to act morally.
And indeed I would say that whatever thinking I've done about it or reading I've done about it is also irrelevant. This isn't an intellectual exercise. There's a wonderful line by one of my heroes, Emerson, where he says that it takes a great deal of thought to produce a tiny elevation of life.
You know, it isn't the thinking and the analyzing that produces good deeds. It's being a better person. And that is the product of influences on us that determine what we are going to be.
Intellectuals acted terribly during the Nazi era.

MOYERS: Many of them joined the cause.

SAUVAGE: There were many Ph.D.'s in the top Nazi leadership.

MOYERS: I was struck at how the people in Le Chambon refused to submerge their own particular individual values to some idea of "the public interest," "the common good." They resisted that. They acted out of their own particular faith and their own particular values.

SAUVAGE: I think that's a fundamental point, and a really fundamental lesson: the notion that these people were acting out of their own conscience, indeed breaking immoral laws.
I'm sometimes a little surprised when Americans in particular overstate the importance of laws. Sure, laws are a mechanism to structure society and are necessary. But they are certainly not sacrosanct. And immoral laws should be violated. They should be cheerfully broken.
The Holocaust was entirely legal.

MOYERS: Slavery was legal.

SAUVAGE: Slavery was legal.

MOYERS: What happened to the Jews in Germany was written into law. It had the sanction of majoritarianism.

SAUVAGE: We are responsible. Individually. We cannot defer that responsibility to the government, to the leaders. "Well, they passed a law, so that's what it should be."
And we're also responsible for our leaders. Something I also learned from Le Chambon is not to overstate the significance of leadership. Now it happens that Le Chambon, as we saw in the film, had extraordinarily inspired leadership. Pastor Trocmé was a brilliant man. And an extraordinarily committed man. But at the same time, you had a community that had it in its nature...

MOYERS: Leaders don't create communities. Communities raise up leaders to express and manifest their character.

SAUVAGE: That's right.
I think that we are all individually accountable, responsible, for what we do and what we fail to do. That the buck stops here. And the here is always with you.
Certainly we're not faced with the type of choices, normally, that people during the Holocaust were faced with. We're faced with far smaller choices. Or they seem smaller.
And yet we're constantly faced with choices that are somehow parallel, that involve extending yourself to lend a helping hand, maybe even taking a slight risk. It won't be your life, but it'll be your job, or it'll be bucking the company, or it'll be saying something in defense of somebody else that may not be popular.
You know, if Hitler had been alive and available to me, of course I would have welcomed the scoop, but at the same time, he would not have been the perfect villain for me. This film was not about commission. It was about omission. It was about the difference between being a bystander and not being a bystander.
And that's the choice that most of us are faced with all the time. That's what makes the rescuers so relevant. We're not faced with choices of being murderers or not being murderers.
Of course, if we compare ourselves to Hitler and Goebbels, we come out smelling like a rose. We have to compare ourselves to people who realize that one must not be apathetic when one's own identity is at stake.

MOYERS: When you first showed me the film some time ago now, I argued with you, remember? I said you shouldn't call it *Weapons of the Spirit*, because I didn't believe you should mix the military metaphor with what was essentially a spiritual and religious manifestation.
You clung tenaciously, stubbornly, and, I must say, rightfully, to your original title. Why did you call it *Weapons of the Spirit*?

SAUVAGE: All through the making of the film it was my working title, and I always thought that maybe something else would leap out at me—I wasn't sure I wanted quite that abstract a title. But the title helps to underscore a certain toughness to the spirit.
A great director I know called Sam Fuller, the great "B" director, years ago I was telling him about the film. We were at a party and he was walking around. I told him that I was looking for a title. And he came back to me and he said, *Bullets of Faith.* And that went a little far...
But the idea of underscoring the toughness of the spirit appealed to me, I think.

MOYERS: There's something contentiously paradoxical about it, though. Because if the spirit can be used as a weapon, it was insufficient to prevent the darkness, the ruin, the devastation, the horror and the evil that fell upon Europe in what you say is, or was, a "Christian" culture.
Isn't there a danger is suggesting that the spirit can withstand the onslaught of human nature as manifested in the opposite of what we see in your film?

SAUVAGE: I think on balance there's a greater danger in not believing it, in believing that somehow the spirit does not have the power to transcend everything.
You know, even when it comes specifically to the experience of Jews during the Holocaust—and certainly for many years there was that concern that paying attention to the rescuers might somehow take the edge off the experience, as you're suggesting. I think that is simply not the case. I think that we need to know that it was *possible* for people to care.
If we pass along a legacy that does not include the righteous, does not include the rescuers, then we're giving humanity an alibi. One doesn't even have to aspire to do better, because it isn't possible.
And in fact, yes, the G.I.'s liberated the camps, the American G.I.'s. But let's face it, it was an accident. That was not the reason they were there. In fact, you talk to troops and they were stunned by what they saw because nobody had ever even told them that that's what they were going to be encountering, along the way.

MOYERS: Americans did not go to war to save the Jews.

SAUVAGE: No, they did not. The people who went to war to save the Jews were the people who were using the weapons of the spirit.
They were individuals here and there, throughout Europe, often acting alone, unlike Le Chambon, which at least had the strength of being a community—of course, that's also what makes it interesting—and who simply exercised nothing else but the powers of the spirit.

MOYERS: Well, it's very important, it seems to me, to remember this as the century comes to an end, and to teach our children that there were the Le Chambons.
But not at the expense of constantly reminding and training our children that this was a horrible century, and that the darkness fell. And that seems to me to be the... Does it not seem to you to be the primary lesson of the 20th century? That darkness is real, and evil is there?

SAUVAGE: No question about it. No question about it.
Of course, this century has been a terrible century, but I will even say that contrary to what people might assume I am not particularly an optimist about human nature. I think—I won't engage in a profanity here—but I think the world is a pretty awful place.
But I think that the only way to survive the experience of living in it is to realize that it need not be that.
And the only way to come to any such realization is to have examples. Kids, I think, will, in fact, be able to absorb the magnitude of the evil if they have something to hold on to. If it doesn't sap them of their... spirit.
Stories like Le Chambon, stories of rescuers, are really almost like a banister which you can hold onto while looking at the evil of this world.

If we don't feel deeply, within ourselves, that we are capable of good we will be extremely reluctant to face the extent to which we are capable of evil. And indeed, without question, we are capable of both.

"BILL MOYERS INTERVIEWS FILMMAKER PIERRE SAUVAGE"

VIDEO CREDITS

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BETSY MCCARTHY

director of photography
PHIL GRIES

editor
MICHAEL DAROVEC

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DAVE SPERLING

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BOB BLAUVELT

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STEVE ROGERS

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ELEANOR BOGART

special thanks
JUDY.DOCTOROFF
ARTHUR WHITE
PUBLIC AFFAIRS TELEVISION

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

VIDEOTAPE AND TRANSCRIPT INFORMATION

COMMENTS ABOUT *"WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT"*

ABOUT THE FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON FOUNDATION

PIERRE SAUVAGE—PUBLIC SPEAKER

FRENCH COMMENTS ABOUT *"WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT"*

"A TIME FOR RESCUE: VARIAN FRY AND THE EMERGENCY RESCUE COMMITTEE"

"THE OPTIMISTS: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE BULGARIAN JEWS AND THEIR SURVIVAL DURING THE HOLOCAUST"

"AND CROWN THY GOOD: THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE OF THE HOLOCAUST"

"YIDDISH: THE MAME-LOSHN"

LIFESTYLE: ARTICLE ON PIERRE SAUVAGE AND FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON

DuPONT-COLUMBIA AWARDS ADDRESS BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, JAN. 30, 1992

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE: ARTICLE ON LE CHAMBON, OCT. 13-14, 1990

LOS ANGELES TIMES: ARTICLE ON LE CHAMBON, OCT. 15, 1990

TIME INTERNATIONAL: ARTICLE ON LE CHAMBON, NOV. 5, 1990

ASSOCIATED PRESS: ARTICLE ON RIGHTEOUS GENTILES, MAY 29, 1984

"LEARNING HOPE FROM THE HOLOCAUST," ADDRESS BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, JULY 1988

"TEN THINGS I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT IN LE CHAMBON AND ELSEWHERE DURING THE HOLOCAUST," ARTICLE BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, FALL 1985

"ON BEING A CHILD OF THE HOLOCAUST," ADDRESS BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, MARCH 11, 1984

"JESUS AS A GOY," ARTICLE BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, SEPT. 24, 1988

"A MOST PERSISTENT HAVEN," ARTICLE BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, OCT. 1983

"*WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT*: A JOURNEY HOME," ARTICLE BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, MARCH 17, 1987

"PAIN, GUILT AND RAGE: HAVE WE MOVED BEYOND," INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY PIERRE SAUVAGE, NOV. 6, 1988

"*WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT*: CLASSROOM VERSION—VIEWER'S GUIDE," ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE

EXCERPTS FROM *THE HOLOCAUST IN FRENCH FILM* BY ANDRÉ PIERRE COLOMBAT (SCARECROW PRESS, 1993)

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over, please

Pierre Sauvage as an infant, held by a woman who helped hide his family from the Nazis

WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT

A film by Pierre Sauvage
90 minutes, documentary, 16 or 35mm, 1989

"Incroyable! As compelling and exciting as fiction... A film that will be around for a long time."
Charles Champlin, *Los Angeles Times*

WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT tells the extraordinary wartime story of Le Chambon, a tiny Protestant farming village in the mountains of France that defied the Nazi occupation and provided a safe haven throughout the war for thousands of Jews — many of them children.

One of those children was the infant Pierre Sauvage, who grew up to chronicle the village's remarkable but little-known history.

Interweaving filmed interviews with striking and rare visual material (including hundreds of never-before-seen photographs, provocative stock footage underscoring French collaboration with the Nazis, and specially declassified government documents), *Weapons of the Spirit* constitutes a memorable historical document.

But even more important, the film is a fable-like account of the triumph of good over evil. It is a joyful, moving, realistic celebration of humanity's capacity for good, a parable with applications for everyone, everyday.

Who were these villagers who daily risked their lives to help total strangers of another faith? Most of them were proud descendants of the Huguenots. The history of their own persecution at the hands of their countrymen was keen in their memory, as was the biblical admonition to love your neighbor as yourself.

"The responsibility of Christians," their pastor had reminded them the day after France surrendered to Nazi Germany, "is to resist the violence that will be brought to bear on their consciences through the weapons of the spirit."

There were many other uncelebrated individual and collective acts of good will and righteousness throughout the dark war years. But nowhere else did a persistent and successful moral consensus develop on a scale approaching that exhibited at Le Chambon.

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— Tom Jacobs, *Los Angeles Daily News*

"Riveting. A poignant reminder that good people don't have to surrender their beliefs even in the terror — or the lethargy — of the times."
— Judy Stone, *San Francisco Chronicle*

"Moving and provocative... Enormously uplifting... What an extraordinary story."
— David Ansen, *Newsweek*

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- Documentary Award, Los Angeles Film Critics Association
- Documentary Gold Hugo, Chicago International Film Festival
- Red Ribbon Award, American Film and Video Festival
- Audience and Jury Awards, Yamagata Intl. Documentary Film Festival, Japan
- Audience and Jury Awards, Belfort Film Festival, France

An exceptional 30-minute companion piece, *Bill Moyers Interviews Pierre Sauvage*, is also available, as is a French version of *Weapons of the Spirit* titled *Les armes de l'esprit*.

WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT

written, produced and directed by Pierre Sauvage

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HE WAS BORN AND PROTECTED IN THAT DEFIANT HAVEN—LE CHAMBON.

U.S.A./France, 1989, 90 minutes, color—35mm, 16mm, video
English-language with some French, subtitled (also French-narrated version, *Les armes de l'esprit)*

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Current U.S. theatrical/non-theatrical distribution: National Center for Jewish Film, 617/899-7044

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Wilbur Award, RELIGIOUS PUBLIC RELATIONS COUNCIL ♦ Humanitarian Award, HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL COMMITTEE
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André Pierre Colombat, *The Holocaust in French Film* (Scarecrow Press, 1993)

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"Remembering the Holocaust—Looking *in* instead of out"

PIERRE SAUVAGE, filmmaker and lecturer

Filmmaker Pierre Sauvage is both a child survivor of the Holocaust and a child of Holocaust survivors.

An independent film producer in Los Angeles, he is best known for his 1989 feature documentary *Weapons of the Spirit,* which tells the story of a mountain community in France that defied the Nazis and took in and saved five thousand Jews, including Pierre and his parents. He himself was born in this unique Christian oasis, Le Chambon, at a time when much of his family was being tortured and murdered in the Nazi death camps.

Weapons of the Spirit won numerous awards, including the prestigious DuPont-Columbia Award in Broadcast Journalism for best independent documentary (sharing that award with P.B.S.' *The Civil War* series). The film received two national prime-time broadcasts on P.B.S., along with Bill Moyers' probing interview of the filmmaker, which revealed that Sauvage did not learn till the age of 18 that he and his family were Jewish and survivors of the Holocaust.

Sauvage was 4 when he and his parents moved to New York City in 1948, returning to Paris at 18 to pursue his studies. After working briefly as a journalist like his father, the Sorbonne drop-out fell in love with film at Paris' legendary Cinémathèque Française, eventually landing a job there working for the eccentric genius Henri Langlois.

Producer-director Otto Preminger brought the budding film scholar back to New York as a story editor, and in 1971 Sauvage moved to Los Angeles, where he now lives with his wife, an executive at Aaron Spelling Productions, and two young children.

After co-editing a two-volume critical study of American film directors, *American Directors,* Sauvage finally got behind the camera himself as a staff producer-reporter for Los Angeles public television station KCET. While producing over 30 hours of varied programming, his first real success came when he decided to begin exploring those Jewish roots he'd never known. *Yiddish: the Mame-Loshn* ("the mother tongue," pronounced mama-lushen) developed into a lively, Emmy-winning portrait of a unique and tenacious language and culture.

Sauvage is currently writing the screenplay for a dramatic theatrical film based on the true story of Americans who were involved in rescue and romance in Marseille after France fell to the Nazis. Another movie he is developing is about an American pro-Fascist plot to seize the White House, a plot that actually occurred in 1939 and was infiltrated by the F.B.I.

A popular lecturer, Sauvage has become one of a tiny handful of experts on rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust (righteous Gentiles), and has appeared on "CBS This Morning," "CBS Nightwatch" and N.P.R.

He is the founder and president of the Friends of Le Chambon Foundation, a nonprofit charitable organization based in Los Angeles and committed to exploring and communicating the necessary lessons of *hope* still buried beneath the Holocaust's unavoidable lessons of despair—and to do so while there are still eyewitnesses to tell the story.

Sauvage's lecturing and public appearances with *Weapons of the Spirit* are all under the foundation's auspices and supports its projects.

At present, Sauvage is focusing his attention on the *American* reaction to the massacre of the Jews of Europe. He contends that we in the United States, Jews and non-Jews, must begin facing and probing the lessons of our own experience here at that time, however challenging those lessons may be.

It is time, he urges, to remember the Holocaust by looking *in* as well as merely *out.*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

In Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, France, 5,000 Jews *were* sheltered from the Nazis by 5,000 Christians, as recounted in the feature documentary *Weapons of the Spirit*. The film was made possible by contributions to the Friends of Le Chambon Foundation, a nonprofit organization committed to exploring and communicating, especially on film, such necessary lessons of *hope* still buried beneath the Holocaust's unavoidable lessons of despair.

The Friends of Le Chambon Foundation was founded in 1982 by Los Angeles producer Pierre Sauvage, who serves as President. Sauvage, who was himself born in Le Chambon to parents who found refuge there, is a popular public speaker about the Holocaust and its meaning for us today. His lecturing and public appearances are all under Friends of Le Chambon's auspices.

Other Friends of Le Chambon Foundation activities have included participation in conferences and university lecture series, the creation of a photographic exhibit on Le Chambon (currently available from the Los Angeles Jewish Federation's Martyrs Memorial and Museum of the Holocaust), and the development of an ever growing, specialized photographic and document archive on the Holocaust and rescue in France, as well as on the American experience during that time: the opening special exhibit at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., "Assignment Rescue: Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee," relied heavily on Friends of Le Chambon's Varian Fry collection.

Most pressingly perhaps, the Friends of Le Chambon Foundation is drawing on the experience of *Weapons of the Spirit* to specialize in the production and distribution of motion picture and television documentaries dealing with other as yet uncharted and important aspects of those times. We are, after all, living now in the last few years when it will still be possible to make such historical documentaries *with the participation of eyewitnesses to those events*. Astonishingly, there is at present no other organization—Jewish or non-Jewish—that actively and systematically assists in such a crucial educational effort.

Among our current documentary projects are Jacky and Lisa Comforty's *The Optimists—The Life and Times of the Bulgarian Jews and Their Survival During the Holocaust*, another labor of love, and one requiring final post-production support. Also in the works are Pierre Sauvage's *A Time for Rescue: Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee*, a future companion piece to a planned dramatic feature, as well as his cautiously gestating *And Crown Thy Good: The* American *Experience of the Holocaust*.

Friends of the Righteous: The Friends of Le Chambon Foundation also provides some financial assistance to needy wartime rescuers of Jews. It is our policy that the full *one hundred percent* of all contributions made out specifically to Friends of the Righteous will go to such individuals and their families, with all operating costs being independently subsidized.

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Contributions to Friends of Le Chambon are tax-deductible.
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Pierre Sauvage, President
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THE OPTIMISTS— THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE BULGARIAN JEWS AND THEIR SURVIVAL DURING THE HOLOCAUST

a documentary film by Jacky and Lisa Comforty

a Friends of Le Chambon coproduction
Pierre Sauvage, executive producer

In March 1943, 8,500 prominent Jews of Bulgaria were to be the first from that country to be deported to the death camp at Treblinka. Bulgaria was allied with Germany, and yet another Jewish community of Europe seemed destined for quick annihilation.

In that same month, the Nazis successfully deported the 11,500 Jews of Bulgarian-occupied Thrace and Macedonia. Moreover, antisemitism and persecution were not wholly absent during those years from the Bulgarian landscape.

And yet, after waiting several hours at deportation centers, the first targeted Bulgarian Jews were simply told to go home. Ultimately, despite Nazi pressures, the entire 50,000-strong Jewish community of Bulgaria was spared the Holocaust--the only major Jewish community of Nazi-occupied Europe to survive intact. Bulgaria, in some important respects, was an "unknown Denmark."

After the war, most Bulgarian Jews made their way to Israel, all the while usually retaining a profound affection for their former Bulgarian compatriots, to whom most credit their survival.

Chicago-based Israeli filmmaker Jacky Comforty, himself born in 1954 to Bulgarian Jewish parents, has long been determined to present this story on film. The sweeping changes in Eastern Europe at last made possible exhaustive, ground-breaking reseach in Bulgaria, as well as four months of filming in Bulgaria, Israel, and, also, Spain. A major grant by the Amado Foundation in 1993 has brought completion of this project tantalizingly close.

The survival of the Bulgarian Jews also meant the survival of their rich and distinctive Sephardic tradition. The tradition flourished for five hundred years, and remains today a vibrant link to the highly developed Jewish culture of medieval Spain, once the dominant culture of the Jews.

Thus, the remarkable saga of Bulgarian Jewry provides new insights into positive aspects of the Jewish experience in Europe, as well as into still unexplored dimensions of the experience of the Holocaust. *The Optimists* (working title) will at last tell this remarkable story, and will do so just in time, before those who lived it have passed away or completely assimilated into mainstream Israeli society.

For this production, Jacky and Lisa Comforty have entered into partnership with Friends of Le Chambon, a nonprofit charitable foundation, and its president, Pierre Sauvage. Friends of Le Chambon and Pierre Sauvage's feature documentary *Weapons of the Spirit*, which dealt with another episode of rescue in wartime France, has been widely shown and acclaimed. Released theatrically in 1989, it received two prime-time nationwide broadcasts on P.B.S., which were followed by Bill Moyers' interview of the filmmaker.

A TIME FOR RESCUE:
VARIAN FRY AND THE EMERGENCY RESCUE COMMITTEE

a documentary film

a Friends of Le Chambon production
Pierre Sauvage, executive producer

A Time for Rescue will be the dramatic account of the astonishing true-life adventure of an American hero in Nazi-occupied France. His name was Varian Fry, and he died alone and forgotten in 1967. Yet he was the American Raoul Wallenberg.

As soon as France fell to the Nazis, the 32 year-old Fry--a dapper intellectual, not Jewish, and with no preparation for the dangerous intrigue that lay ahead--volunteered to take a month's leave from his editing job and go to France. His assignment: to rescue Jewish and anti-Nazi artists, intellectuals and political refugees before the collaborationist Vichy regime turned them over to the Nazis.

The bustling port city of Marseille was the last stop for those who still hoped to escape Nazi Europe. Fry arrived there in August 1940 with $3,000 taped to his leg and a long list of names of people needing help.

By the time he was arrested and kicked out of France a year later--with the complicity of the U. S. State Department--Fry and his dedicated "Emergency Rescue Committee" had saved some 1,200 people, Fry personally smuggling several of them over borders to freedom. Among the rescued were many of the artistic and intellectual luminaries of that time: artists Marc Chagall and Max Ernst, poet André Breton, sculptor Jacques Lipchitz, harpsichordist Wanda Landowska, writers Heinrich Mann and Franz Werfel, philosopher Hannah Arendt...

Pierre Sauvage, through his Greenvalley Productions, has acquired the motion picture rights to Mary Jayne Gold's memoir *Crossroads Marseilles 1940*), and is writing the screenplay for the motion picture that will be based on it.

A Time for Rescue (working title) will be the necessary, parallel documentary record of this adventure. The story will be told without narration, making it come alive through dramatic readings from the memoirs, the correspondance, and relevant official documents and news reports, as well as through interviews with key witnesses to the events. Prominent stars will be cast for the readings.

Visually, the film will draw on the extensive Fry photographic collection. Fry was an enthusiastic amateur photographer, and his original negatives are at present part of the archives of Friends of Le Chambon, the nonprofit charitable foundation which will be producing this film, under Pierre Sauvage's supervision. The photographs are the primary basis for the new U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's first temporary exhibit in 1993.

Friends of Le Chambon and Pierre Sauvage's feature documentary *Weapons of the Spirit*, which dealt with another episode of rescue in wartime France, has been widely shown and acclaimed. Released theatrically in 1989, it received two prime-time nationwide broadcasts on P.B.S., which were followed by Bill Moyers' interview of the filmmaker.

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AND CROWN THY GOOD: THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE OF THE HOLOCAUST

a feature documentary film by Pierre Sauvage
a Friends of Le Chambon production

"The opposite of love is not hate; it is indifference."
Elie Wiesel

For a long time, we said we didn't know. And of course, that was true. How could we have known? How could we have imagined the unimaginable?

We were genuinely shocked by those first newsreels of the liberation of the Nazi death camps. But we quickly filed away those horrible images and moved on.

After all, had this not happened *there*, been done by *them*? Here in America at least, had we not all been united in one great cause, on one great battlefield?

Only gradually has another truth begun to sink in: the Holocaust had in fact been the overriding moral battlefield of that time.

And that battle--to the extent that Americans recognized and fought it at all--was essentially lost on America's watch.

And we *had* known--the world had known--far more than we had let on.

Thus, it was not just *them* and *there*; it was also *us* and *here*. It turns out that we were part of the story too--all of us. And the experience did not leave us unscathed.

And Crown Thy Good will tell that story--just in time, before more key eyewitnesses have passed on.

Pierre Sauvage is an Emmy Award-winning documentary filmmaker and a European-born Jew much of whose family perished in the Holocaust.

The unusual circumstances of his own birth and survival are told in his feature documentary *Weapons of the Spirit*, an award-winning, critically acclaimed account of a Protestant mountain community in France that defied the Nazis and took in and saved 5,000 Jews.

The film, Friends of Le Chambon's first production, was released theatrically in 1989, and received two prime-time nationwide broadcasts on P.B.S., which were followed by Bill Moyers' interview of the filmmaker.

Now living in America where he was raised, the filmmaker brings to the project both the pain of the survivor and the hope of the immigrant.

Like *Weapons of the Spirit*, *And Crown Thy Good* will rely heavily on the selected testimony of eyewitnesses, combined with photographs, home movies, provocative newsreel footage, and commentary. The result will be akin to an American *Sorrow and the Pity*.

In the late '30s, for instance, the Nazi military attache in Washington encouraged American fascists with the opinion that there was ten times more anti- Jewish feeling in the U.S. than there had been in Germany before Hitler's rise to power.

The news from abroad became official--confirmed by the State Department--at the end of 1942: the Nazis were embarked on a campaign to murder the Jews of Europe.

Many newspapers played the story on their front pages. The readers of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, for instance, saw the following headlines at breakfast on November 25, 1942:

NAZIS ACCUSED
OF PLAN TO KILL
4 MILLION JEWS

DR. WISE SAYS ORDER
TO EXTERMINATE RACE
HAS BEEN HALF FULFILLED.

(Rabbi Stephen S. Wise was a prominent American Jewish leader.)

Yet by June 1944, according to one public opinion poll, Americans viewed Jews as a larger threat to the U.S. than the Nazis or the Japanese.

The question has not yet been addressed on film: Just how easily did the American ethos accomodate itself to antisemitic, isolationist and pro-fascist sentiments?

In his nostalgic 1987 film, *Radio Days*, set in New York during the Holocaust, director Woody Allen casually portrayed a Jewish family as seemingly indifferent to--or ignorant of--the plight of their European brethren. In the Pulitzer Prize-winning hit play and motion picture *Lost in Yonkers*, set in New York in 1942 and 1943, playwright Neil Simon has done the same.

In both instances, not a single voice was publicly raised to question these characterizations!

Do we really take it for granted that the responses portrayed were typical or appropriate? What *did* American Jews know and do?

And what of the American churches and religious leaders? Did anybody rise to the challenge? Who *were* the Americans who cared, and what can we learn from them?

Rev. Howard Brooks, for instance, spent the summer of 1941 in France as a representative of the Unitarian Service Committee, administering medical services in the squalid internment camps set up by the collaborationist Vichy regime.

Upon his return he wrote a book, *Prisoners of Hope: Report on a Mission*, which he published in 1942, and in which he says the following:

> "It is a curious sensation to see children in a camp for the first time. There is something unreal about it; you find it hard to believe. . . . If there were anything worse than this imprisonment of children, I thought while there, it was the indifference of the world, the fact that the world was not revolted."

At the time those words were read by those who cared to buy or borrow that book, the United States was at last pitting its might against the Axis threat.

Yet till the end, the Nazi war against the Jews was allowed to continue virtually unimpeded. The U.S. Government even declined to bomb the railway lines leading to Auschwitz. America, from sea to shining sea, remained the great bystander.

A clear-eyed American historian, the son of Christians, surveyed this period and titled his study *The Abandonment of the Jews*.

Does that experience not cry out for further, personalized exploration of the no man's land between knowing and not knowing, between perceiving the truth and acting upon it, between acknowledging the past and denying it?

Witnesses in the film will range from the celebrated to the obscure, each providing a complementary piece of the puzzle. Through their testimony and through vividly illustrated narration, the film will chart and reflect upon the American experience at one of history's greatest and most tragic turning points.

Chronicling both the experience itself and the ways in which we have remembered it, *And Crown Thy Good* will constitute an important testimony for today and a crucial legacy for tomorrow.

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YIDDISH: THE MAME-LOSHN

(Yiddish: the Mother Tongue)

a documentary by Pierre Sauvage for KCET-TV, Los Angeles
U.S.A., 1979, 58 minutes, color--video, 16mm (tape-to-film)
English-language with some Yiddish, subtitled.

U.S. DISTRIBUTION:
National Center for Jewish Film
Brandeis University—Lown, 102
Waltham, MA 02254-9110
Tel.: 617/899-7044 Fax: 617/736-2070

FOREIGN DISTRIBUTION:
Greenvalley Productions
8033 Sunset Boulevard #784
Los Angeles, CA 90046
Tel.: 213/650-8986 Fax: 213/654-4689

Yiddish: The Mame-Loshn ("the mother tongue," pronounced "mama lushin") is an affectionate, Emmy Award-winning portrait of a unique and tenacious language and culture.

Examining the importance of Yiddish to American Jews today, this first documentary ever made about the centuries-old language of the Jews evokes its riches through interviews, music, humor, poetry and film clips. It features interviews with comedian David Steinberg, the late actor Herschel Bernardi, writer Leo Rosten and many others, as well as rousing musical punctuation by the pioneer *klezmer* band The Klezmorim.

Shot in New York and Los Angeles for Los Angeles public television station KCET-TV, *Yiddish: the Mame-Loshn* was written, produced, co-directed and reported by Pierre Sauvage. Although both his parents had come from Yiddish-speaking homes, Sauvage himself was raised by them in New York without Yiddish in a French-speaking home; he did not even learn he was Jewish till he was 18. This documentary was his first step at exploring cultural roots which he'd never known.

Filmmaker Sauvage went on to make *Weapons of the Spirit*, the much acclaimed 1989 feature documentary about Le Chambon, the Huguenot community in France that became a haven for 5,000 Jews during the Holocaust, including Sauvage and his parents.

Reviews and comments on *Yiddish: the Mame-Loshn* have included the following:

"Yiddish lore and derivations, traditions and opinions have been admirably asembled and showcased in hour docu produced, written by Pierre Sauvage who, as interviewer, keeping an admirably low profile, asks helpful questions."
Daily Variety, July 3, 1979

"Anyone interested in the Jewish culture shouldn't miss this comprehensive documentary on Yiddish, 'the mother tongue.' 'What other language has long endured without a homeland?' Sauvage asks, and then effectively proceeds to evoke the pleasures of Yiddish through interviews, poetry, illustrations, clips from Yiddish films and the lively music of the Klezmorim.

"Comedian David Steinberg, actor Herschel Bernardi, author Leo Rosten, editor of the Daily Forward Simon Weber, Dr. Joshua Fishman of New York's Yeshiva University and Yiddish scholar Dr. Saul Goodman are among those elucidating the joys of Yiddish from both personal and historical perspectives."
The Hollywood Reporter, July 5, 1979

"I love the program. We watched it at our home twice with delight. It is a gem."
Newton N. Minow, [then] Chairman of the Board, P. B. S.

"After having hosted the Tonight show and guested on numerous prime time network TV shows, I still have a tendency to underestimate the power of the medium. But imagine my pleasure in striking such a responsive note from people in all walks of life—Jewish and non-Jewish—for your documentary. Months later, I still hear about it daily with people remarking, 'Why can't there be more of this!'"
David Steinberg

"I enjoyed your program on the Yiddish language more than I can tell you. It is colorful and dramatic. I am sure that most people know very little about Yiddish and this even includes many Jews. They think of it just as a jargon. This program should go far and wide. I am sure it will not only be a revelation, but a source of great pleasure to many, many people."
[The late] Rabbi Edgar F. Magnin, Wilshire Boulevard Temple

"Les armes de l'esprit"

un film de Pierre Sauvage

POURQUOI ET COMMENT UN COIN DE FRANCE SE TRANSFORMA EN HAVRE DE REFUGE POUR 5.000 JUIFS PENDANT L'OCCUPATION.

PIERRE SAUVAGE, LUI-MÊME NÉ ET PROTÉGÉ AU CHAMBON-SUR-LIGNON (HAUTE-LOIRE), Y EST RETOURNÉ POUR SAVOIR POURQUOI.

LE RÉCIT DOCUMENTÉ D'UNE SINGULIÈRE CONSPIRATION POUR LE *BIEN*!

États-Unis/France, 1989, 90 minutes, couleurs—35mm, 16mm, vidéo
Ventes télévision: Charles Schuerhoff, CS Associates: (19.1) 415.383.60.60 (fax: 19.1.415.383.25.20)
Autres droits: Friends of Le Chambon Foundation (et Greenvalley Productions),
ainsi que pour *Weapons of the Spirit* (version américaine, avec narration et sous-titres en anglais),
Weapons of the Spirit—version scolaire (vidéo, 35 minutes) et *Bill Moyers Interviews Filmmaker Pierre Sauvage* (vidéo, 25 minutes)

FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON FOUNDATION • Pierre Sauvage, Président
8033 Sunset Boulevard, no. 784 • Los Angeles, CA 90046, U.S.A.
Tél.: (19.1) 213.650.17.74 • Fax: (19.1) 213.654.46.89 • Internet: flc@earthlink.net

Friends of Le Chambon Foundation est une fondation à but non lucratif incorporée aux Etats-Unis.
Sa mission: explorer et communiquer le souvenir de la *shoah* en intégrant les nécessaires leçons d'*espoir*.

Vidéocassettes en vente au Chambon-sur-Lignon: Librairies Fayet (**71.59.76.91**) et L'Eau Vive (**71.65.85.50**)

Invité à 20 festivals: une quinzaine de prix internationaux dont
prix du public et mention spéciale du jury, Festival de Belfort **prix du public**, Festival documentaire de Yamagata (Japon)
prix de la critique cinématographique, Los Angeles **prix documentaire à la télévision**, DuPont-Columbia University
9 semaines à l'affiche à Paris (10 000 entrées), sans publicité...
4 à 7 semaines à New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington, Boston—sorties dans plus de cinquante villes américaines
Deux diffusions nationales à la télévision américaine (1990, 1992, réseau P.B.S., 21h. à 23h.,
y compris une interview de Pierre Sauvage par Bill Moyers.)

Télévision française Par dérogation spéciale du C.N.C., la diffusion fut autorisée dès 1992.
Selon les critères du C.S.A., le film constitue une oeuvre cinématographique d'expression originale française.
À ce jour, le film demeure inédit à la télévision française.

"SI VOUS VOULEZ APPRENDRE CE QUE PLUS D'HOMMES ET DE FEMMES AURAIENT PU FAIRE POUR SAUVER LES JUIFS, REGARDEZ LE DOCUMENTAIRE POIGNANT DE PIERRE SAUVAGE. SUPERBE!"
Élie Wiesel, témoin, écrivain, prix Nobel de la paix

"JE FUS BOULEVERSÉ. COMMENT DONNER UNE IDÉE DE LA FORCE DE CE FILM DANS SA SOBRIÉTÉ TOUTE SIMPLE. IL FAUT LE VOIR! C'EST UN GRAND SERVICE QUE L'ON PEUT RENDRE À LA FRANCE."
l'abbé Pierre, Journal de 20h., TF1

"QUAND LA BARBARIE DOMINAIT L'EUROPE, IL Y EUT DES 'JUSTES' POUR DIRE NON. SAMUEL PISAR RAPPELLE ICI LE BEAU DOCUMENTAIRE "LES ARMES DE L'ESPRIT" ET LES TÉMOIGNAGES DE CES PAYSANS DU PLATEAU CÉVENOL QUI SAUVÈRENT 5 000 JUIFS AU PÉRIL DE LEUR VIE.
LA RÉPUBLIQUE LEUR REND HOMMAGE. CAR C'EST PAR DE TELS HOMMES, DE TELLES FEMMES, QUE SES VALEURS FONDATRICES DE LIBERTÉ, D'ÉGALITÉ, DE FRATERNITÉ, SI SOUVENT BAFOUÉES, JAMAIS ACQUISES, CONTINUERONT DE TRIOMPHER."
François Mitterand, Président de la République,
à l'occasion de la sortie de *"La liste de Schindler"*

"UN DÉFI SUPERBEMENT RELEVÉ. UNE TERRIFIANTE INTRODUCTION À UNE DISCUSSION SUR CE CHAPITRE VOILÉ DE L'HISTOIRE, LES FRANÇAIS SOUS L'OCCUPATION."
Jean Hatzfeld, Cahiers du Cinéma

"UN DOCUMENTAIRE BOULEVERSANT DE SIMPLICITÉ, SANS EXCÈS NI EFFET. INDISPENSABLE."
Lionel Pailles, L'Express

"UN CHAPITRE FASCINANT DE L'HISTOIRE AINSI QU'UNE ÉPOPÉE ON NE PEUT PLUS PERSONNELLE. MÉRITE UNE DISTRIBUTION INTERNATIONALE...ACCESSIBLE À L'HUMANITÉ TOUTE ENTIÈRE."
Variety (USA)

"EXTRAORDINAIRE....PROFONDÉMENT ÉMOUVANT ET PERSPICACE."
The Hollywood Reporter (USA)

"UNE SOBRE LEÇON DE COURAGE ET DE DIGNITÉ. POUR TOUS."
Ange-Dominique Bouzet, Libération

"BOULEVERSANT"
Robert Chazal, France-Soir

"PASSIONNANT"
Emanuèle Frois, Le Figaro

"ÉTONNANTE ÉPOPÉE DE LA DISCRÉTION, DU COEUR, ET DE L'INTELLIGENCE."
Éric Leguèbe, Le Parisien

"UN MESSAGE D'ESPOIR ET UN GESTE DE GRATITUDE"
Marie-Élisabeth Rouchy, Télérama

"UN NOUVEAU CHAGRIN ET LA PITIÉ? UNE SUITE DE SHOAH?
Catherine Delaprée, L'Événement du Jeudi

"UN DOCUMENT HISTORIQUE IRREMPLAÇABLE. IL ÉTAIT POSSIBLE D'AGIR."
Christine Jaulmes, La Croix

"EXCEPTIONNEL. GRÂCE A CE FILM, JE SAIS UN PEU MIEUX MAINTENANT POURQUOI JE SUIS PROTESTANT."
Arnaud Marsauche, Réforme

"UNE HISTOIRE EXTRAORDINAIRE...ÉLÈVE ÉNORMÉMENT L'ESPRIT"
Newsweek (USA)

"LUMINEUX"
Boston Globe (USA)

"OLYMPIEN...STUPÉFIANT"
Philadelphia Inquirer (USA)

"SUBLIME"
Atlanta Constitution (USA)

"J'AI VU LE FILM L'AUTRE SOIR, ET JE L'AI ADMIRÉ"
Elia Kazan, réalisateur

"APRES **'NUIT ET BROUILLARD', 'SHOAH', 'LA PASSAGÈRE'**, *IL Y AURA DÉSORMAIS —J'AI ENVIE D'ÉCRIRE SURTOUT—* **'LES ARMES DE L'ESPRIT'**. *CE FILM VA—ET DOIT—BOULEVERSER."*
Claude Miller, réalisateur

"IMAGES BOULEVERSANTES D'UNE FRANCE MÉCONNUE ET UNE AUTRE FACE DU CINÉMA—PAS LA MOINDRE"
Jean-Louis Mingalon, Le Monde

"LE FILM ABORDE AVEC LUCIDITÉ UN ÉPISODE TROP PEU CONNU DE NOTRE HISTOIRE. JE NE DOUTE PAS QUE LA QUALITÉ ET LA FORCE DU SUJET SUSCITENT ÉGALEMENT L'INTÉRÊT D'UNE CHAÎNE DE TÉLÉVISION."
Jack Lang, alors Ministre de la Culture et de la Communication

"AVEC **'LA LISTE DE SCHINDLER'**, *STEVEN SPIELBERG, DANS LE SILLAGE DE L'ŒUVRE MONUMENTALE DE CLAUDE LANZMANN,* **'SHOAH'**, *ET DU DOCUMENTAIRE POIGNANT DE PIERRE SAUVAGE (MON COUSIN GERMAIN),* **'LES ARMES DE L'ESPRIT'**, *VISE LA CONSCIENCE DU PUBLIC LE PLUS LARGE. L'EXEMPLE DE CES 'JUSTES' LAISSE ESPÉRER QUE, DEVANT LES NUAGES NOIRS QUI S'AMONCELLENT DE NOUVEAU SUR L'EUROPE, L'ESPRIT DE L'HOMME TRIOMPHERA DES DÉMONS DE SON PASSÉ."*
Samuel Pisar, témoin, avocat, écrivain

"UN CHEF-D'ŒUVRE PERSONNEL ET MODESTE QUI PEUT NÉANMOINS ÊTRE COMPARÉ AUX PLUS GRANDES RÉUSSITES DU MONUMENTAL **'SHOAH'** *ET DU* **'CHAGRIN ET LA PITIÉ'**. *LE FILM PEUT ET DOIT JOUER UN RÔLE DANS NOTRE NÉCESSAIRE RÉFLEXION SUR LES MEILLEURES STRATÉGIES À ADOPTER POUR COMBATTRE L'INTOLÉRANCE ET LES CRIMES QU'ELLE ENTRAÎNE."*
André Pierre Colombat, *"The Holocaust in French Film"* (Scarecrow Press, USA, 1993)

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Film

Weapons Of The Spirit

PIERRE SAUVAGE's documentary portrays the heroism of a unique village community in France

By Connie Louise Katz

Imagine a Hollywood motion picture filming on location. The scenic backdrop is the breathtaking, mountainous countryside of an isolated farming community in France during the 1940s. The storyline features adventure, thrills, suspense, despair, hope, romance, intrigue, danger and life-saving rescues. The characters include heroes, heroines and villains. Sounds like all of the perfect ingredients for a fabulous drama to unfold. Point of fact is that this is no fictional format, but rather a true, life-and-death scenario in which the fate of thousands hung in the threads of circumstance and in the hearts and minds of a village community and their "conspiracy of goodness."

Few things in life are as fascinating as the turn of events that shape the course of our lives, or make our lives possible at all. Such was the chain of events leading up to and surrounding the birth of Pierre Sauvage.

In 1940, that country fell to the Nazis. The country was divided: northern France was a Nazi-occupied zone; the southern half was administered, under Nazi control, by Marshal Pétain. Pétain, urging collaboration with the Nazis, established his capital at Vichy. In November, 1942, the German army occupied southern France as well as leaving the convenient Vichy regime in place.

A hundred miles from Vichy, nestled in the isolated, mountainous countryside of south-central France, was the farming village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon. The people of Le Chambon were mostly Protestant fundamentalists. They traced their ancestry to 16th century Huguenots.

The simple farming village had, in quieter times, welcomed visitors from neighboring cities, who came to enjoy the beauty, serenity and mountain air of this peaceful haven. But when the Vichy police began rounding up and imprisoning Jews, other visitors, many of them seeming to be quite desperate, began streaming into the village.

Thus, in the fall of 1943, the parents of Pierre Sauvage made their way from Marseilles and Nice to Le Chambon. Barbara Sauvage, a Polish Jew, had met Léo Sauvage, a French Jew, in Paris' Latin Quarter in the thirties. Pregnant with their first child - medically a problem pregnancy and psychologically a defiant one - she had been strongly advised to secure a quiet environment with proper food and rest if the baby was to survive. At this time in France, foreign Jews were the primary targets of the Vichy government and were most likely to be handed over to the Nazis. Under these circumstances, Sauvage's parents rented a room in a farmhouse in Le Chambon, and on March 25, 1944, Pierre Sauvage was born in the nearby hospital.

Thirty-eight years later, having become a filmmaker, Pierre Sauvage returned to Le Chambon. He was to embark on what would be for him not only a monumental seven-year undertaking to unravel his past, but also the beginning of bringing to the world's attention, through his documentary, *Weapons of the Spirit*, the astonishing and single-minded outpouring of goodness produced by a simple people in a quiet, unassuming, non-violent resistance to tyranny and oppression. For this 5,000-member community, over a period of four years, had taken in and sheltered 5,000 Jewish refugees from the Nazis.

They accomplished this without a single incident of betrayal, right under the noses of the Nazi and Vichy government, despite German raids, searches and the very presence of convalescing soldiers within the town. The villagers did it without a thought of heroism or courage on their part, in the face of extreme danger to themselves, simply because it was part of their moral and religious convictions.

The challenge to Sauvage was to preserve and convey their simplicity. Judging from the many awards and the extraordinary rave reviews the film has received during its theatrical release and most recently, upon its television premieres as a prime-time national special on PBS, Sauvage has triumphantly succeeded. The interview of Sauvage by Bill Moyers that followed the PBS broadcast of the film also brought wide attention to what only select audiences had known before: that he is a stimulating, thoughtful and articulate speaker. None of this came naturally.

Some time after the close of World War II, Sauvage, who was then four years old, arrived with his parents in New York. His father became a foreign correspondent and author, and Sauvage attended the French Lycée school, becoming bilingual and bicultural.

His parents put their past behind them to the extent of not even allowing him to know that he was Jewish. "However, even though I didn't know I was Jewish when I was growing up, most of my close friends were Jewish. In fact, most of them were connected to the Holocaust in some way. That's always been to me a confirmation of something I tend to believe more and more: the extent to which things can be passed on from generation to generation without being explicitly identified or labeled.

"I had special rapport with and among those Jews who had European and Holocaust connections. It didn't require that I be identified as to what I was," he says. "Years later, when I was a producer at Los Angeles Public Television Station KCET, I did an hour-long documentary special on Yiddish - *Yiddish: the Mame-Loshn*. It was quite successful; it won an Emmy. Yet, I was brought up with no Yiddish

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Pierre Sauvage in front of the railway station at Le Chambon - the same railway station that served as the wartime stepping-off point for so many Jews, including his parents. This photo was taken during his recent return to the village for the local premiere of his film, *Weapons of the Spirit*.

whatsoever. Obviously, since my parents were hiding that they were Jewish, they weren't talking Yiddish, even though my mother could have spoken Yiddish fluently. Indeed, my father, it turns out, also spoke Yiddish. Yet prominent *Yiddishits* have seen the documentary and have not found fault with it. I'm very interested in the way things get passed on," he continues.

At the age of 18, Sauvage prepared to study in Paris at the Sorbonne. It was only then that his parents told him of his Jewish heritage. As a result of the Holocaust, Sauvage's mother had lost her mother, a younger brother, her sister, her brother-in-law and a niece. Those who survived were primarily those able to escape Europe.

"One uncle of mine - a brother of hers - had gone to Australia. Another brother had gone to Paris and then to Australia, and is still alive and lives in Israel," Sauvage says. The only member of his mother's family who survived the death camps was his mother's nephew. It was with this cousin that Sauvage stayed in Paris, shortly after learning of his background.

In Paris, Sauvage neglected his literature and legal studies and became a film buff. While working at the French Cinematheque, he organized a tribute to producer/director Otto Preminger. Preminger offered him a job working for him in New York. The film business later brought him to Los Angeles.

"A friend of mine was putting together a book on American film directors and asked me to work on it with him. The book, *American Directors*, appeared and is highly regarded, but it soon became clear that I was much more interested in making my own films than in learning everything I could about somebody else's. At KCET, I did a wide range of documentaries, but the very first show I produced there was a studio show called *Reflections on the Holocaust;* it brought together several generations of Jews grappling with their attitudes towards the Holocaust."

It was in Los Angeles that Sauvage started his own family. "We met in Paris in 1968, although we really didn't hook up seriously until I came to Los Angeles in 1971. She has been an extremely important influence in my life. She is very Jewishly rooted, secure and committed." A teacher when they were married, Barbara M. Rubin became a lawyer, then a television business affairs executive. She was co-producer of *Weapons of the Spirit*.

Although he had returned to Le Chambon with his parents at 16, the impact and information Sauvage was later to understand did not come to full fruition until some time after his son, David, now 10, was born. Sauvage stresses that positive examples are most valuable in teaching children about the world they will have to live in.

"If we are to expect our kids to approach the world of the Holocaust, they have to have something to hold on to. They will not approach it if they sense it's going to undermine their ability to function in the world. They need to have something solid and positive. Yes, the world was bad, but it needn't be like that, and there were people who demonstrated that even then. To me, this is the essential

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part of it.

"For my own son, David, there was the additional dimension that I was working out my own feelings about all of this - the extent to which I was burdened by this unacknowledged history. I wanted to come to grips with what I believed in order to be a better father."

In undertaking the task of developing and researching material for his proposed documentary, *Weapons of the Spirit,* Sauvage encountered several resistances. His parents did not want him to dredge up old, painful memories which they had so carefully chosen to bury; the people of Le Chambon, on whom he depended for information and support, were concerned that they might be perceived as being boastful about deeds that had come naturally to them. They simply felt they had acted in the only way that made sense to them. As one elderly village woman describes the experience in Sauvage's film, "It happened so naturally, we can't understand the fuss. It happened quite simply. I helped because they needed to be helped...what happened had a lot to do with people still believing in something. The Bible says to feed the hungry, to visit the sick. It's a normal thing to do." Another villager echoes this belief: "We never asked for explanations. Nobody asked anything."

During his return to Le Chambon, Sauvage posed with two of the leading subjects of his award-winning documentary, Marie Brottes and Henri Heritier. Later that day, they both received the Medal of Righteousness from the Israeli Ambassador of France.

The people of Le Chambon took literally the Christian edict to "love thy neighbor," to have respect for fellow "people of the book, the Jews of the Old Testament." They were themselves (historically speaking) subject to deportation and imprisonment during the Huguenot persecution of the 16th century.

In taking in the Jews, hiding them within their homes and providing for their escape when possible, Sauvage sees their actions as the result of the power of collective memory. "They had to improvise. They had no plan, they had no experience except the experience of their ancestors. There again, identity. All of this was in some way familiar to them."

The title of the film comes from a wartime sermon given to the people of Le Chambon by their church pastor, Andre Trocmé, in which he said, "The duty of Christians is to resist the violence that will be brought to bear on their consciences through the weapons of the spirit."

Sauvage is convinced that it was a combination of factors which led to the amazing result of the Jews' survival. "What were some of the components that allowed them to do that? I think the film tries to suggest a web of elements; certainly religion played a very important role, as well as psychology and self-esteem. They had inspired leadership...." There was "the happenstance of geography, in that they were in a fairly isolated place...and that there was a sort of positive uniformity. Obviously there was a wide range of opinions on a lot of things, but not on the issue of whether you turn people away," Sauvage says.

On the question of how the villagers were able to hold steadfastly to their beliefs in the face of certain adversity and possible death, Sauvage sees it as a matter of personal strength on their part. "They had a very strong sense of personal identity, of who they were; in a sense they didn't even know how to budge from that sense of identity. To have acted any other way would have been to be untrue to themselves. They understood what was at stake: not only what might happen to the other, but also their own continued sense of appropriate self-esteem. I think that's the reason that what they did appears to them now to have been so natural and effortless, and why they don't understand that anybody else could make a big deal about it," he says.

"I'm not really interested in heroism as people define it, and don't even believe in it particularly. What is striking is how easily people can gravitate towards doing the right thing in very challenging and difficult situations, and how much we can learn from them," he points out.

It was partly in order to explore and teach what he increasingly saw as the universal lessons of Le Chambon that Sauvage in 1983 founded Friends of Le Chambon, a non-profit charitable foundation. "Friends of Le Chambon was started initially with two purposes. One was, of course, to perpetuate the memory of what occurred in Le Chambon, notably by making this film. But the broader purpose has always been to explore and communicate what I've called the necessary lessons of hope beneath the unavoidable lessons of the spirit," he explains.

Instrumental in the birth of the documentary was Michel Roux, the extraordinary French-born marketing genius, who was the architect of the tremendous success of Absolut Vodka and a collection of other products in the United States. Ironically, *Weapons of the Spirit* found backing by spirits of another kind - through the generosity of Roux and his Grand Marnier Foundation.

Sauvage is at present pursuing mainstream motion picture and television projects, but the period of the war years remains a subject of endless fascination to him, despite the commercial limitations of many of the stories to which he is attracted. "There are projects that simply cannot be developed commercially, which will not exist without support from individuals, foundations or organizations. And this is particularly true because support for Jewish media projects in general is abysmal.

"Making *Weapons of the Spirit* was a monumental fundraising ordeal. I hope that my supporters will get gratification from their association with the film. But it's not readily obvious to philanthropists that there can be as

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much lasting gratification from having your name on the credits of an important film documentary as there can be from having it on a building," he points out.

Through Friends of Le Chambon, Sauvage is in the process of developing several documentary projects, whose existence will depend "on the kindness of strangers." One of these films, already in production, is about the survival of the Jews in Bulgaria. "All the Jews of Bulgaria survived, even though Bulgaria was allied with the Nazis. It is an amazing and unfamiliar story. You might say, that in some respects, Bulgaria was 'the unknown Denmark.'"

Another important dimension of the story, Sauvage says, is that the Bulgarian Jewish community was Sephardic. If all goes well, the release of *The Life and Times of the Bulgarian Jews*, on which Sauvage serves as executive producer (Jacky and Lisa Comforty are producing), will be tied in with the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. "Director Jacky Comforty himself is the son of Bulgarian Jews, and he is as determined to tell this story as I was to tell mine," Sauvage says.

A second documentary project on Sauvage's horizon will tell the story of Americans who were involved in rescue operations in the French port city of Marseilles in 1940-41.

The key figure in this undertaking was a scholarly intellectual named Varian Fry. "Fry will inevitably become known as the American Raoul Wallenberg," says Sauvage. "He went off to Marseilles for a few weeks to do what he could, and ended up spending a year, having helped over 1,200 people to get out, including many of the most prominent Jewish and anti-Nazi intellectuals of the time.

"For them, as the net tightened, Marseilles was the last stop. It was from Marseilles that you hoped to get out, to get to Spain, Portugal or North Africa. Fry and his group, which called itself the "Emergency Rescue Committee," ended up saving people like Marc Chagall, Max Ernst, Jacques Lipchitz, Wanda Landowska and Hannah Arendt –the list just goes on and on," Sauvage says.

"What a man like Fry underscores," he continues, "is what it was *possible* for people to do, what it was *possible* for people to know. When he got kicked out of Marseilles and came back to the U.S., he spent the rest of the war years writing articles, issuing photographs, trying to stir up concern in America for what was occurring in Europe.

"I have an article he published in December of 1942 in the New Republic, a front page article with big black bold letters on the cover: "The Massacre of the Jews" by Varian Fry."

"I've come to feel very, very strongly that in America we're going to have to come to some understanding of what we knew, what we did about it, and what we failed to do about it. A bystander is also part of the crime. The Holocaust occurred on America's watch. The American-Jewish failure is certainly part of the story, but it has to be put into context. America, at that time, was a vastly different country from what the wartime patriotic hoopla has lead us to remember or imagine." (In this connection, Sauvage has obtained the motion picture rights to best-selling author Charles Higham's 1985 study, American Swastika, which outlines the extent of pro-Nazi sentiment and collaboration in the U.S. before and after Pearl Harbor. And Crown Thy Good is Sauvage's working title for his planned exploration of the American experience of the Holocaust, a project he views as probably the most difficult and sensitive he will ever undertake - and a huge fundraising challenge.

But given his determined focus on the Holocaust, is he not afraid of being typecast? He displays no such concern. "I have interests in other projects. I even hope to do a comedy one day. But quite frankly, if somebody were to tell me that they were going to fund me for the rest of my life, comfortably, and that the only restriction was that I continue to explore aspects of those times in project after project using my particular slant, I would welcome such an opportunity. It's the period that shaped me, and it was one of the greatest laboratories of human nature that one could imagine," he says.

"Things are seldom on that scale in terms of good and evil and all the gradations. In addition, I have a great sense of urgency; *Weapons of the Spirit* barely could be made today, because many of the key witnesses have died since I made it. This is really quite a striking fact when you think about it: It is only within the next five or 10 years that one will be able to make documentary projects dealing with that period and involving the substantial input and testimony of eyewitnesses. How can one not feel a sense of urgency, a need to document this unbelievable period for my children and for theirs?"

In association with Maryland businessman Hal Kass, Friends of Le Chambon, through a unit called Friends of the Righteous, is also doing its share to assume a sense of responsibility toward the aging, sometimes needy righteous gentiles, of the Holocaust. "Our key rule - and this is pretty unusual in the non-profit world - is that 100 per cent of all contributions specifically earmarked for Friends of the Righteous will go to needy individual rescuers. Not 99 per cent, but 100 per cent. Any financial needs for administration and so on will be so identified and will be taken care of separately," Sauvage explains.

Together with his wife Barbara, son David and three-year-old daughter, Rebecca, Sauvage directs his many projects from his office, nestled in a quiet area of the Hollywood Hills, in Los Angeles, California.

He has made many journeys, traveled many roads, both physical and psychological. He willingly discloses that religiously, he is a person in flux. "I'm not really sure where I'm going to end up," he admits. "I still would not define myself as a religious person. But I know that I am no longer an anti-religious person. I believe that religion raises important issues and deals with adult concerns."

Sauvage has, in many ways, come to terms not only with his past, but also with his future. ♦

For information about Weapons of the Spirit, Friends of Le Chambon or Friends of the Righteous, please contact Friends of Le Chambon, 8033 Sunset Blvd., #784, Los Angeles, California, 90046 or phone (213) 650-1774.

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'Righteous Gentiles'

An Issue Splits Holocaust Panel

TUE MAY 29 1984

New York

Survivors of the Nazi Holocaust disagreed yesterday on whether "righteous gentiles" who helped Jews during World War II deserve special recognition for their good deeds.

Pierre Sauvage, one of a panel of five who experienced the Holocaust as children and survived, told how he, his family and 5000 other Jews were saved by the 5000 residents of the French mountain village of Le Chandon.

The panel discussion was part of the activities on the second day of the Conference of Children of Holocaust Survivors, which has drawn 1700 participants to New York.

Sauvage, a Los Angeles documentary filmmaker, said it is important to publicize the acts of gentiles who helped Jews to give the Holocaust "a meaningful moral perspective" and not concentrate totally and bitterly on gloom and evil.

Christians should know about the good deeds "as an example, so they will know how to behave in the future," he said.

Sauvage, who has made a film about Le Chandon, said even the local German army commander was caught up in the "conspiracy of goodness" created by the devout Protestant villagers.

Wounded German soldiers convalesced in a village hotel and noticed "that the town was full of Jews." After the war, Sauvage said, he learned the commander knew about the Jews in Le Chandon but did nothing about it.

Tova Friedman, an Israeli social worker who survived the death camp at Auschwitz, said of the Christians who helped, "OK, so there were a few."

"But why are we so surprised that there were a few good people on this Earth? Where were all the rest?" she asked.

Telling of her life as a 6-year-old who thought going to the crematoriums was the fate of everyone and therefore had no fear of them, she said, "I had no positive experiences."

She spoke with vehemence against "giving medals to people who only did what they should."

Holocaust historian and novelist Elie Wiesel was the keynote speaker at yesterday's opening session. He told the "second-generation" participants they are "guardians of the tale" of the Holocaust and should not let it be trivialized into "silly, stupid, cheap pictures on television."

Associated Press

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INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, SATURDAY-SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13-14, 1990

A Village's Conspiracy in Vichy France

By Barry James
International Herald Tribune

PARIS — Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, this weekend will award an entire French village the prize it normally gives to individuals who put their lives on the line to save Jews during the Nazi persecution.

While the French Vichy government willingly cooperated with the Nazis in rounding up and deporting 80,000 Jews to concentration camps, the people of the farming village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon saved 5,000 Jews who heard about the place by word of mouth and arrived from all over France. They were hidden under the noses of the Nazis in homes in the village southwest of Lyon in a "conspiracy of goodness," as one refugee described it, that was kept a tight secret throughout the war.

Pierre Sauvage, who was born of Jewish parents in Le Chambon in 1944, has told the story of the rescue in a restrained yet powerful movie called "Les armes de l'esprit" ("The Weapons of the Spirit"), which came out in the United States last year but has not been shown in France before this week. It opened at a movie house in Paris and was given a special showing at the French Senate.

Sauvage, a journalist and documentary filmmaker who works for the Public Broadcasting Service in the United States, said in an interview here that his most demanding and important audience will be the people of Le Chambon, where the movie will be screened this weekend. Some of the Jews who survived thanks to the courage of the villagers will be at the award ceremony.

The story of Le Chambon is at first sight an antidote to the bleak record of Vichy France. But Sauvage said that even if the movie does not relentlessly hit people over the head with guilt feelings, it is an indictment nonetheless.

"The villagers in themselves are an accusation," he said, "because the existence of these people underlines the fact that it was possible for a community to do something to save the Jews and get away with it."

He said the action of Le Chambon touches on fundamental questions of good and evil. Clearly most people were not evil like Hitler and his immediate accomplices. Most Frenchmen under the Vichy regime were indifferent, they did not want to get involved, they turned a blind eye to the creeping moral infection described by Albert Camus in "La Peste," his allegorical novel about the occupation. Camus began the book while living in a pension in Le Chambon.

"On the other hand," said Sauvage, "there were a number of ordinary people who did feel responsible, which raises these questions: How come the people in this village realized what was at stake? How come they rose to the occasion when others did not?"

Filmmaker Pierre Sauvage explores the question of why the people in one French village risked their lives to hide Jews from the Nazis.

One answer, he said, is that most of the people of Le Chambon were Huguenots, or Calvinist Protestants, with their own collective memory of persecution, their awe of the Bible and their respect for fellow "people of the book," the Jews of the Old Testament. "People could not help but see parallels between the Jews and their ancestors, who were persecuted and deported to serve in the galleys," Sauvage said. All told, one Jew was saved for every inhabitant of the village. Thanks to a master forger called Oskar Rosowsky, who now practices as a doctor in a suburb of Paris, the refugees were provided with new identities and documents. Some were spirited to safety in Switzerland, but most of the Jews remained in the village.

Had history, then, taught the people of Le Chambon how to conspire?

"That's probably true," Sauvage said. "I have come to believe in the potency of collective memory. I suppose that in one corner of their mind they remembered what they had to do. It came naturally. Perhaps their ancestors had hidden people before. They did not intellectualize the problem. It was a gut reaction."

A crucial lesson to be learned from Le Chambon, Sauvage said, is that "contrary to what novelists and dramatists say, good people don't agonize. Quite the contrary. The people of Le Chambon did the obvious thing that came to their minds."

Sauvage said that, when he first started making the movie in the early 1980s, many of the elderly people he interviewed, several of whom have since died, were reluctant to talk because "they were terrified of being turned into symbols, they were legitimately concerned that they would be made unrecognizable to themselves.

"They minimized what they did. This was not modesty; they simply did not believe it was a big deal. They felt their duty was clear."

Sauvage, a fluent French speaker, said people seem to have taken him into their confidence because he had been born in Le Chambon. In return, he tried to keep his film as simple as the villagers themselves, respecting their wishes not to be made into heroes. As a result it is low-key and entirely without special effects, but nonetheless moving for that.

Although many of the Jews paid for room and board — the villagers were poor and needed the money — Sauvage said he had come across no cases of exploitation. "Even when Jews did not have money, they were taken in."

Although the people of Le Chambon rose spontaneously to the occasion, they were also inspired by a remarkable pastor, André Trocme. The title of the movie comes from one of his sermons, in which he said that "the duty of Christians is to resist the violence that will be brought to bear on their consciences, through the weapons of the spirit." The message of nonviolence was one that Trocme stressed again and again, yet it was one "that fell on fertile soil," among people who took seriously the command to love their neighbor, Sauvage said.

For Sauvage, the movie was also a personal voyage of discovery. After the war, his father went to the United States where he became the New York correspondent for the Paris newspaper Le Figaro.

Until he was 18, Sauvage was unaware of his Jewish heritage. He attended the French Lycee in New York, later lived for several years in France and considers himself biculturally Franco-American as well as bilingual.

"I would not define myself as religious, but I am not anti-religious either," he said. "I believe that religion raises very important and adult questions and can be a potent force for good."

"Weapons of the Spirit," raises the intriguing possibility that Le Chambon's conspiracy may have spread further afield. Sauvage believes that the local police prefect, Robert Bach, a Protestant, must have been aware of what was going on. But could the German Wehrmacht official in charge of the Haute-Loire district, Julius Schmahling, also have been in on the plot? Some Jews have objected to the movie because it asks this question.

"Weapons of the Spirit" played successfully in the United States, and won several awards including the Prix du Public at the Belfort film festival in 1988. Yet French distributors repeatedly told Sauvage there was no market for the film in France, without ever saying exactly why. He hopes to prove them wrong.

"The Belfort prize suggests that the French may be more willing to deal with these issues that intellectuals or officials in Paris claim," he said. "Perhaps ordinary people understand what people in high places still squirm about."

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LOS ANGELES TIMES

FLC# 155

Jews Thank the French Town That Saved Them

By RONE TEMPEST
TIMES STAFF WRITER

CHAMBON-SUR-LIGNON, France—The people of this hard-scrabble hill town in the French Massif Central Range never thought of themselves as heroes.

They didn't think twice when several thousand terrified Jews came here seeking shelter during World War II and Nazi Germany's occupation of France. The townspeople were mostly Protestant Christians whose ancestors suffered centuries of persecution in Roman Catholic France. When the Jews asked for refuge, Chambon-sur-Lignon gave it.

By the end of the war, the little Huguenot farming village in the Haute Loire region of France had protected 5,000 Jews—one for every man, woman and child in the town.

On Sunday, the aging population of this remarkable town was acclaimed for those acts of courage and integrity 50 years ago.

In an emotional afternoon, they saw for the first time an American documentary film, "Weapons of the Spirit," by Los Angeles filmmaker Pierre Sauvage, dedicated to the town. And the Israeli ambassador to France, Ovadia Sofer, awarded them Yad Vashem medals of "righteousness" for their courage.

On hand for the ceremonies were several dozen of the wartime Jewish refugees and the handful of people who saved them who are still living.

The survivors found themselves overcome by affection mixed with a feeling that they had never properly acknowledged the people of the town.

"We had no idea of the terrible things that were going on outside Chambon," remembered one of the survivors, Jack Lewin of Woodmere, N.Y. "These people protected us from the horror. I will never forget what they did."

Lewin, 65, is an American Jew who was born in Germany and found refuge in the town for two years before escaping to Switzerland. The ceremonies Sunday marked the second time in four years that the retired chef has traveled here to personally thank the people of Chambon.

Half a century ago, when German soldiers and French collaborators came to Chambon-sur-Lignon hunting Jews, the townspeople refused to cooperate. Several villagers, including Daniel Trocme, nephew of the town pastor, paid the price of their silence by being sent off to Nazi death camps.

"My brother only did what he considered his duty," said Robert Trocme of his sibling, who was exterminated in the Nazi death camp at Maidanek, Poland, in 1944 for sheltering Jewish children. "He was willing to give his life to help reconstruct the future."

The bravery of the people of Chambon and of the peasants in the surrounding countryside stood in stark contrast to the dismal record in much of the rest of France, where more than 75,000 Jews were rounded up and sent to Germany for extermination, often with the cooperation of the French people.

At Sunday's ceremony, the townspeople found themselves a little embarrassed and wondering what it was all about. The town's young Protestant pastor, for one, is concerned that all the attention will cause the town to lose the humility and spirit of righteousness that led to its courageous wartime acts.

"I think these ceremonies are very dangerous," he said, standing outside the small stone Protestant reform church with the words "Love One Another" painted over the door. "We risk breaking the spirit of what we did here. I am afraid we will become too proud of ourselves and lose our ability to react to what happens in the world."

Later in the day, the pipe-smoking pastor used the occasion of the medal awards ceremony to criticize the killing of Palestinian protesters by Israeli police, demonstrating the tradition of religious leaders in the town to speak out loudly and boldly, no matter who is listening. One of his predecessors in the pulpit, pacifist Pastor Andre Trocme, had been credited with leading the Chambon-area effort to resist the Germans and protect Jews. Trocme, uncle of death camp victim Daniel, was the main character in the 1979 book "Lest Innocent Blood be Shed," by American philosopher and historian Phillip Hallie. The book was the first to celebrate the courage of the region.

Probably the most satisfied with the events here Sunday was independent filmmaker Sauvage, who spent seven years interviewing townspeople to make the film.

Sauvage, 46, was born in Chambon-sur-Lignon in 1944. If it had not been for the townspeople who hid his parents, he might not be alive. The doctor who delivered him, Roger Forestier, was arrested and killed by the Nazis.

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SCENE

Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, France

Marking a Blessed Conspiracy

Almost all the local people were involved in saving 3,500 Jews during World War II, and no one said a word. They still don't like to.

By ALEXANDRA TUTTLE

There was a time when Christian de Monbrison would break up his chocolate into small squares and store it in matchboxes. As a youth in Occupied France during World War II, he was keeping the candy for the day when he would be taken to prison—as, sooner or later, most Jews were. But Monbrison was fortunate: he spent the whole war in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, protected by the 3,000 residents of the Cévenne mountain village, which lies 140 km to the south of Vichy, and the surrounding plateau.

Marie Brottes in 1942; with Sauvage and Héritier today

"Resistance to Nazi and Vichy authority came quite naturally to these people. They never agonized over it."

There is nothing in the closed faces of the villagers today to suggest the hamlet's extraordinary heroism almost a half-century ago. Inspired and organized by a Calvinist pastor named André Trocmé, the residents of the area saved the lives of some 3,500 Jews during the war. Mordecai Paldiel of Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, says the village was unique in that "almost all the people of the plateau were involved in saving these Jews, and no one said a word."

In mid-October a delegation from Israel arrived in Chambon to award 40 villagers the Medal of Righteousness, which Yad Vashem gives to individuals who risked their lives to save Jews from Nazi persecution. The commemoration was also marked by the showing of a just-completed documentary, *Weapons of the Spirit,* which tells the story of what filmmaker Pierre Sauvage calls Chambon's "conspiracy of goodness." Sauvage, 46, was born in Chambon and as an infant was sheltered there, along with his parents, from Nazi persecution. "The resistance of the villagers showed just how strong people can be," he said during the ceremonies, "when they know who they are and believe in their traditions."

On street corners, at cafés and in the churchyard after the Sunday service, surprises turned up in the crowd of faces that had softened and filled out with age. Recalled Monbrison: "I eventually gave my chocolate to a classmate as he was being led away following a Gestapo raid on the village in 1943. I thought he had died long ago. But I ran into him today, near the school where we first met." A number of the refugees were returning for the first time; others had been back before to see those who had sheltered them. "Many of these people must have thought we flew away like birds from a tree and forgot the welcome we found here," said Joseph Atlas, a Paris engineer who spent three years in Chambon. "Ours is a culture that never forgets. But the horror of the war had to be digested before we could return to our memories."

In the auditorium of the village hall, a group of historians, many of them too young to remember the Occupation, discussed exactly how many Jews were saved at Chambon. They also debated the suggestion in the documentary that a German officer in the area may have known of the quiet resistance of the Protestant villagers and tolerated it.

At the center of the celebration was the Cévenol School, which was built in 1938 to accommodate 14 local children. Its student body soon expanded, however, with the arrival of 220 Jewish refugees fleeing from the internment camps to the south. The children, like their parents and other adults, were welcomed without hesitation. They were housed on farms or in hotels and were hidden in the countryside whenever the Germans came through. "As soon as the soldiers left, we would go into the forest and sing a song," remembers August Bohny, 71, who ran a boardinghouse for Jewish students. "When they heard that song, the Jews knew it was safe to come home." Whenever possible, the refugees were sent via a well-organized underground network to safety in Switzerland or Spain.

In an ecumenical service held just before the awards ceremony, the local pastor, Alain Arnoux, watched Jews and Protestants file out of his church. "They have been resisting injustice for centuries," he said of the Huguenot tradition of his parishioners. "Resistance to Nazi and Vichy authority came quite naturally to these people. They never agonized over it."

In writing about Nazi war crimes, Hannah Arendt remarked upon the banality of evil. The people of Chambon are a reminder that goodness, as well, can be quite ordinary, if not exactly banal. They reacted to the situation so instinctively that, in the words of one old farmer, "we don't know what all the fuss is about." After the showing of the documentary, the Chambonnais filed quietly out of the auditorium, while the former refugees stopped to talk to Sauvage. At the Yad Vashem ceremony, Marie Brottes, who had scouted the area for people willing to provide sanctuary, and Henri Héritier, who had sheltered Sauvage's parents and others on his farm, walked reluctantly onto the podium to receive their medals. Ely Ben-Gal, a historian with the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv, apologized to the townspeople for "the violence we do in forcing such recognition upon you."

As if in reply, an old villager explained to a visitor, "We didn't protect the Jews because we were moral or heroic people. We helped them because it was the human thing to do." Then, characteristically, he declined to give his name. ■

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DUPONT-COLUMBIA AWARDS IN BROADCAST JOURNALISM,
P.B.S., JANUARY 30, 1992

SILVER BATON, INDEPENDENT PRODUCTIONS,
AWARDED TO *WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT*

Introduction by Betty Rollin, NBC News:

In contrast to *The Civil War*, which almost every one seems to have seen, at least in part, our other award in the independent category goes to a 90-minute documentary you may indeed have missed.

It too is historical, about a small town in southern France called Le Chambon. There, during World War II, the descendants of French Huguenots hid 5,000 Jews during the Holocaust. One was a newborn baby who returned years later to document their courage. Tonight he wins an Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia Award for *Weapons of the Spirit*. [Excerpts from *Weapons of the Spirit*.]

Full text of acceptance speech by Pierre Sauvage, which he edited down during the broadcast because of time pressures:

That era of industrialized mass murder, in whose inescapable shadow we live, was also--was perhaps especially--the era of the apathetic bystander. The Holocaust occurred wherever people *allowed* it to occur.

We here in the United States too have yet to face the inadequacy of our own response to the massacre of the Jews of Europe, just as we have cared so little to learn from those few people--Americans among them--who could not disregard what their eyes and their brain and their heart and their gut was telling them, who simply could not, under those circumstances, remain bystanders.

And yet each and every one of us in our everyday lives face again and again and again those types of decisions--whether or not to remain a bystander in the presence of some injustice, some pain, some unmet need.

Lastly, allow me to mention that unlike the deeds of most rescuers, making *Weapons of the Spirit* did not come naturally to me. I was not raised on these stories, did not even learn that my family and I were Jewish until I reached the age of 18.

But it is obvious to me now that we must find new ways of telling these incredible stories that tell us so much about ourselves, and that there *are* necessary and challenging lessons of hope embedded in those unavoidable lessons of despair. *Weapons of the Spirit* was an attempt to begin probing those lessons, and I thank the jurors of the DuPont-Columbia Awards for their gratifying recognition of the P.B.S. broadcast.

I thank my wife and co-producer, Barbara Rubin, for her wisdom, her love, her faith. I thank cameraman Yves Dahan and film editor Matthew Harrison; Bill Moyers for his help and his trust--and for being a mensch; Elie Wiesel for his early encouragement; Michel Roux and the Grand Marnier Foundation for their generous and crucial support; Harvey Meyerhoff, Niuta Titus and the Helena Rubinstein Foundation, and the many contributors, large and small, to Friends of Le Chambon, the nonprofit foundation in Los Angeles which made the film possible; my son David and my daughter Rebecca, who made the film necessary; and of course the people of Le Chambon for rescuing me not only as the hunted baby I once was, but also, many years later, as the rootless, self-denying, oversecular human being I was in the process of becoming.

"Remembering for the Future":
Jews and Christians During and
After the Holocaust
International Scholars' Conference
Oxford University, England
July 10-13, 1988

FLC # 78

LEARNING HOPE FROM THE HOLOCAUST

by Pierre Sauvage

Friends of Le Chambon
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I am a 44 year-old European-born Jew.

That means that around the time of my birth, much of my family was humiliated, tortured and murdered--while the world watched.

I am a descendant of the persecuted, the heir to bitter memories.

I am the father of two young children.

It is in these capacities that I presume to participate in this important conference, and I will not adopt the dispassionate tone of scholarly discourse; the Holocaust and its legacy are not subjects which I wish to address as if I had nothing personally at stake.

As Elie Wiesel has asked, "What does one *do* with such memories of fire--with so many fragments of despair?"

One can never be the same after groping with the realization that it is possible for man to hate that much, for man to love that little. What one *does* with that knowledge, what lessons one derives from that recent past, has the power to shape how we live, perhaps to determine our very ability to live.

Are we good? Are we evil? Are we strong? Are we weak? Is it natural to care about others? Is it natural to be indifferent? Is trust realistic? Is hope possible? Is God relevant?

For a Jew today, the questions, the implications, take on a special urgency.

Was the Holocaust nothing more than a candid, exacerbated expression of the world's true feelings about the Jews?

Is there is no real point in genuinely cultivating non-Jewish friends and allies since you need only scratch a *goy* to find an antisemite?

Is antisemitism, mild or pestilential, an irreversible aspect of the Jewish destiny, even a necessary part of our present self-definition?

Must survival itself, under these circumstances, become the main Jewish objective--even if there is no ostensible point beyond physical survival, even if what survives is not rooted in the Jewish spiritual heritage, even if what survives is virtually unrecognizable?

Whether one derives these lessons from the Holocaust or less defeatist ones, it is not a matter of choosing to derive lessons from the Event or declining

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to do so, and that is true even for those who display no interest in probing the nature or impact of that human tragedy, those who wish to "move on."

Lessons are automatically learned from any experience, let alone a traumatizing one. What we must do is strive to make those lessons explicit, while pondering the facts that explain them--or challenge them.

As psychologist Carl Rogers said, "The facts are friendly."

And so we must, indeed, learn and acknowledge the facts. We must, indeed, remember for the present and for the future.

But merely repeating that we must remember does not help us to do so. It is not easy to let in something on such a scale, something that challenges our very faith in ourselves.

Remembering cannot be merely an act of blind will. Remembering has to be a creative act.

We must find *ways* of remembering. We must have incentives to remember. We must challenge ourselves as to what we choose to remember, and why.

Referring to George Santayana's famous dictum that "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it," Rabbi Harold Schulweis has pointed out that if memory is not used with wisdom, it too can boomerang; that to remember one part of the past so powerfully that it eclipses all else is also to condemn oneself to its recurrence.

"The problem of our generation," Elie Wiesel has said, "was that if we looked too intently in the direction of the dead, we ran the risk of being tempted to join them."

So we must be careful as to how and what we remember. We must remember that remembering is only a tool, an indispensable key to life--but not an end in itself.

We Jews, of course, are experts at remembering, experts at interpreting our tragedies and making those interpretations serve us for our future.

Every year, for instance, shortly before *Yom Hashoah*, the Day of Remembrance of the *Shoah*, we celebrate Passover, still remembering and working out that bondage that scarred us and traumatized us so long ago.

During the timeless ritual of our seder, our Passover dinner, we symbolically dip the bitter into the sweet. And we end by opening the door to the spirit of Elijah, prophet of good tidings, asking him to bring us that message of hope, to reinforce our faith in the goodness of man.

The ritual for Yom Hashoah is still in its infancy. But must we not, once again, figure out how to brush the bitter against the sweet? Must we not, then, look for the sweet? Not remain for generations stuck in the bitter?

"It takes moral courage to grieve," wrote Kierkegaard. "It takes religious courage to rejoice."

In his book "Optimism: The Biology of Hope," anthropologist Lionel Tiger asserts that optimism is "a biological phenomenon," rooted in the genetic make-up of our species.

Can we confront the Holocaust and remain true to our optimistic natures? Can we rejoice in the presence of murder, of indifference to murder?

We know that there was some good too amidst the bottomless evil, but we also know that there was not enough of it.

What's there to get excited about? Why should we care?

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Rabbi Schulweis, who has been for so long a prophetic voice about the Holocaust's necessary lessons of hope, tells a story about the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Chassidism.

The Baal Shem Tov had a dream. He dreamt that right in front of him was a heart, a heart that embodied in it all the evil in the world.

The Baal Shem Tov began pounding and pummeling that heart, striving to destroy it utterly.

Until he heard a sound coming from deep inside the heart.

It was the cry of a baby.

And the Baal Shem Tov stopped pounding.

Innocence and guilt, good and evil are as inextricably bound together as night and day. They define each other, they need each other, they become meaningless on their own.

Every act of evil and apathy, every moment of hate and inhumanity, every individual and collective failure of will, of intellect, of character, of spirit, can best be confronted, illuminated, accepted, if we remain attuned to their opposites, if our ear does not become deadened to the soft sound of innocence, if we continue to remember that at each and every level of moral decay there was the potential for human solidarity, that this potential was demonstrated time and again sometimes in the most astonishing ways and in a wide range of situations, and that it is essentially the gap between our *proven* human potential and our dreadful human frailty that we must learn about, probe, remember.

How can we measure that gap if we pass on only the failure? How are we to see, how are we to assess, how are we to remember the moral landscape of the Holocaust if we must peer at it only through the pitch-black night of Auschwitz?

Philip Hallie, an eloquent student of evil and good, has written of the need for "realistic hope."

If we merely give lip service to hope, if we perceive it deep down as an unjustified, unrealistic response to the past, we create a tragic, self-fulfilling prophecy, and hope turns into an inappropriate response to the future.

The moral landscape during the Nazi era was not flat. There are fragments of hope to be discovered in the rubble.

Why then do we know so little, why have we cared to know so little about the *chassidei umot ha'olam*, for instance, the righteous Gentiles of all nations, who, according to Jewish beliefs, will have a share in the world to come.

They were, for the most part, seemingly ordinary men and women. But it was given to these people to save lives. It was given to the Christians among them to practice their faith.

"They were so few," we are always told--again and again and again.

Is that really the only important thing we need to know about them? Does moral or spiritual significance bear some relation to numbers? For that matter, what criteria do we have by which to decide what is few and what is many in the midst of such an unprecedented hell?

101 And in any event do we not believe, we Jews most especially, that even tiny minorities may possess important, even divine truths?

Let me be clear. My point is not at all that those times were "better" than we've acknowledged thus far. Indeed, I suspect that in many respects they

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were far worse, the nightmare greater and more debasing.

Death camp survivors will sometimes say that they haven't told us all, that they hold back for our sanity and theirs. I will never forget hearing Wiesel tell a group of students in 1984, seemingly out of the blue, that "We haven't even begun to tell the tale," and that when they do, "the world will tremble."

I for one have come to believe that such statements are not mere hyperbole.

There are more facts to be learned, more pain to be endured. "It is impossible for the physician to heal," said a Chassidic master, "if he does not open up the wound and lay bare its evil."

And thus Irving Greenberg has reminded us not to make any statements regarding the Holocaust that wouldn't remain credible in the presence of burning children.

I have an eight year-old son and a one year-old daughter. I take such an admonition seriously.

My children will know all about the burning children. They will know about the evil of which men are capable.

But they will also know, I hope, that while it is possible to succumb to evil and apathy, it is also possible to recognize and overcome evil and apathy; that the world is ours to make; that there is strength to be derived from being oneself; that there is joy and peace and happiness to be gained from caring about other people.

"To love one's self in the right way and to love one's neighbor are absolutely analogous concepts," wrote Kierkegaard, "are at bottom one and the same."

Those too are potential lessons from the Holocaust. Are they not as necessary for grown-ups as they are for children?

Do we not need something to hold on to as we strive to absorb our capacity for evil, our capacity for apathy?

For my part, I am especially interested in the latter, in passive bystanders, in indifference to evil which, according to Elie Wiesel "is worse than evil for it is sterile as well."

Living in America, I am stunned, for instance, at how much smug comfort we take in the fact that the Holocaust didn't happen there, that the murders were plotted and committed elsewhere.

But it wasn't, of course, just "them" and "there"; the Holocaust occurred on America's watch.

To be a bystander to a murder is to be changed by it. To be a bystander to the Holocaust is to be changed by it for many generations to come.

Nor is it just a matter of the government or of leadership. Ordinary citizens too knew more than we've let on and perhaps avoided knowing even more.

Moreover, the war effort and the flag-waving patriotic hoopla have obscured the powerful, dark forces that continued to permeate American life long after Pearl Harbor, as George Seldes had told us all along and as Charles Higham has recently underscored in his startling books "Trading With the Enemy," which bluntly details corporate America's amoral collaboration with the Nazis, and "American Swastika," which underscores how easily the American ethos accomodated itself to antisemitic and pro-fascist sentiments and activities.

Even a swashbuckling Hollywood hero could be an active Nazi supporter off-screen and get away it, as Higham revealed in his earlier biography of Errol Flynn.

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France has had its "*Sorrow and the Pity*," that pioneering documentary about French attitudes during the Occupation. Is it not time for an American "*Sorrow and the Pity*"?

By the same token, is it not time to learn more about the Americans who cared?

Rev. Howard Brooks, for instance, spent the summer of 1941 in France as a representative of the Unitarian Service Committee, primarily administering medical services in the squalid internment camps set up by the Vichy regime.

Upon his return he wrote a book, "Prisoners of Hope: Report on a Mission," which was published in 1942, and in which he says the following:

> It is a curious sensation to see children in a camp for the first time. There is something unreal about it; you find it hard to believe. . . . Seeing these child internees, I felt for the first time the whole inhumanity, the appalling cruelty, of the situation. I realized in a new way how merciless the world had become. If there were anything worse than this imprisonment of children, I thought while there, it was the indifference of the world, the fact that the world was not revolted.

In December 1942, anyone browsing through a well-stocked newsstand might have noticed the cover of The New Republic magazine, which listed as its lead offering, in strong bold letters, an article entitled "The Massacre of the Jews."

The article's author was Varian Fry, whose extraordinary tale of rescue and derring-do in Marseille, France in 1940-41 will sooner or later be romanticized and made famous by the movies or television--possibly by me.

After being kicked out of France with the complicity of the U.S. Department of State, Fry continued to stay informed about what was going on in Europe and sought to break through to his apathetic countrymen.

He begins his article as follows:

> There are some things so horrible that decent men and women find them impossible to believe, so monstrous that the civilized world recoils incredulous before them. The recent reports of the systematic extermination of the Jews in Nazi Europe are of this order.

Fry goes on to outline the massacre, stating that "Letters, reports, cables all fit together" and "add up to the most appalling picture of mass murder in all human history."

After listing a few concrete proposals for help, Fry quotes a letter from a correspondent in France asking whether the U.S. will, at least, take in more refugees than Switzerland.

"This is a challenge which we cannot, must not, ignore," he concludes.

And that is what it was possible for an American to read and ponder during Christmas of 1942.

I have a fascination for such contemporaneous records of what it was possible to know, what it was possible to feel, what it was possible to do.

Such testimony of word and deed is as valuable to us, I contend, as any testimony we have on that virulent time in our history.

It allows us to see evil through the eyes of the good.

It spares us nothing of the truth, but it contains within itself, because of its source, because of when it was given, because of its very existence, a legitimate, necessary, helpful element of consolation--the proof that it was possible to care.

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There is one other contemporaneous record I would like to cite and it is perhaps the most startling of all--certainly the most provocative.

The words were written by Labor Zionist leader Hayim Greenberg, a European-born American Jew. They were published in February 12, 1943 on the front page of *Der Yiddisher Kemfer* ("The Jewish Militant") under the title "Bankrupt!"

I will quote the first paragraph, as published in English in 1964:

> The time has come, perhaps, when the few Jewish communities remaining in the world which are still free to make their voices heard and to pray in public should proclaim a day of fasting and prayer for American Jews. No--this is not a misprint. I mean specifically that a day of prayer and of fasting should be proclaimed for the five million Jews now living in the United States. They live under the protection of a mighty republic governed by democratic laws. They move about freely through the length and breadth of the land. The vast majority of them have enough food to eat, clothes to wear and roofs over their heads. And if any wrong is committed against them, they are free to protest and to demand their rights. Nevertheless, they deserve to be prayed for. They are not even aware what a misfortune has befallen them, and if they were to look at themselves with seeing eyes they would realize with shock how intolerable this misfortune is. This misfortune consists of the vacuity, the hardness and the dullness that has come over them. It consists in a kind of epidemic inability to suffer or to feel compassion that has seized upon the vast majority of American Jews and of their institutions; in pathological fear of pain; in terrifying lack of imagination--a horny shell seems to have formed over the soul of American Jewry to protect and defend it against pain and pity. At a time when the American Jewish community is the largest and most influential in the world, at a time when the eyes of millions of Jews in Europe who are daily threatened with the most terrible and degrading forms of physical extermination are primarily turned to American Jewry, this American Jewish community has fallen lower than perhaps any other in recent times, and displays an unbelievable amount of highly suspect clinical "health" and "evenness of temper." If moral bankruptcy deserves pity, and if this pity is seven-fold for one who is not even aware how shocking his bankruptcy is, then no Jewish community in the world today (not even the Jews who are now in the claws of the Nazi devourer) deserves more compassion from Heaven than does American Jewry.

As Greenberg goes on, he becomes more specific in his "indictment," as he puts it, targeting prominent Jewish organizations. He ends, however, with the poignant admission that for all his indignation, he does not know if it is still "objectively possible" to do anything, or who should do it, or how it should be done.

Greenberg's wartime colleague Marie Syrkin views things more charitably: "That American Jews achieved pitifully little is their sorrow, not their shame."

To be sure, the American Jewish community of the war years did not have the social, political, and economic confidence it has now, and as I mentioned earlier, there is still much to be learned about what the United States then was really like, and about the difficulties American Jews faced in pressuring the government to save the Jews of Europe.

But how is it that in his nostalgic 1987 film "*Radio Days*," set during the Holocaust, Woody Allen could casually portray American Jews as seemingly indifferent to, or ignorant of, the plight of their European brethren--and do so without one single critic, one single letter to the editor, one single Jewish publication (to the best of my knowledge), bringing up with dismay, surprise or disapproval this aspect of the film!

Do we really take it for granted that this was a typical or an acceptable response?

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Does this indifference to the indifference not suggest that there remains much unfinished business with regard to this chapter of our history?

Commenting about the lack of resistance among ordinary Germans under the Nazis, Bruno Bettelheim points out that "the more energy it took to manage anxiety, the less inner energy remained for the courage to act." Similarly, in the context of Hiroshima and the continuing nuclear threat, Robert Jay Lifton has charted the process of "psychic numbing" in which we commonly engage as victims or potential victims of disaster.

Does the American experience of the Holocaust, Jewish and non-Jewish, not cry out for further exploration of that no man's land between knowing and not knowing, further probing of the nature and consequences of anxiety and psychic numbing, further consideration of what it takes to perceive the truth and act upon it, further awareness of the possible consequences of having failed to do so?

However, if I thought that all I would learn was what terrible and deficient people we were and are, if I found myself merely hammering yet another nail in our psychological and spiritual coffin, if I wasn't convinced that at virtually every stage and virtually every level I would find exceptions to the rule, if I didn't have Rev. Brooks and Varian Fry and Hayim Greenberg as companions in this research, I do not believe I could pursue this interest effectively and I am not sure I would wish to pursue it at all.

In December 1940, an American writer wrote the following: "Our only hope will lie in the frail web of understanding of one person for the pain of another."

The historian David Wyman, a Christian, uses that quote from John Dos Passos to convey the moral framework for his sensitive study of the Roosevelt administration's "Abandonment of the Jews."

Our only hope still lies in the frail web of understanding of one person for the pain of another.

To those of us who must look at ourselves through the smoke and night of Auschwitz such a web is hard to see or even to believe in.

The world turned away even from the cries of burning children. America, sweet land of liberty, turned away.

But is that all we must understand about those times, about ourselves?

Must we not begin to care that there *were* parts of that frail web that somehow held on? If we are to strengthen that web, can we afford *not* to care, not to ask: Who? Why?

In his book "Of Blood and Hope," Samuel Pisar, my first cousin (my mother's nephew) and the only member of the family to survive the death camps, asks whether those who have experienced only "normal life" can understand that "the sacrifices required to cope with some of the world's problems are much less than they suppose," while the dangers involved in ignoring those problems "are infinitely greater than they imagine."

In this age that plays with Mutual Assured Destruction, that threatens to turn the planet into a gigantic gas chamber, has it not become imperative that we locate within ourselves untapped emotional, psychological, and spiritual resources if we are to rescue our future?

"Man if afraid of things that cannot harm him," said the Chassidic master Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav, "and he knows it, and he craves things that cannot be of help to him, and he knows it; but in truth the one thing man is afraid of is within himself, and the one thing he craves is within himself."

"The greatest evil that can befall man," said Goethe, "is that he should come to think ill of himself."

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To be sure, I have personal, biographical reasons for caring about lessons of hope and for people who embody them.

The existence of these people was woven into the very fabric of my life, since I myself was born and sheltered during the Holocaust in a haven of peace known as Le Chambon-sur-Lignon.

There, the day after France surrendered to the Nazis, the pastors of this mountain village in south-central France proclaimed the need to resist violence "through the weapons of the spirit."

There, the peasant and villagers of the area, mostly the proud descendants of Huguenots, defied the Nazis and the collaborationist Vichy regime and turned their tiny community into occupied Europe's most determined, most persistent haven of refuge for the oppressed.

There, some five thousand Jews *were* saved--by some five thousand Christians.

I have told the story of Le Chambon, as I have come to understand it, in a feature documentary film, "*Weapons of the Spirit*."

What I do not say in the film, however, is that I did not grow up with stories about Le Chambon or with stories about the Holocaust. Indeed, I grew up in an intensely secular home that was conceived as a total break with the past, with the Holocaust, with being Jewish, with memory.

Thus Le Chambon affected my life twice, and I'm no longer certain which of the two times is the most important.

To the Jewish baby, Le Chambon provided physical security and survival, a place to be born, a place to be welcomed into this world.

To the traumatized Jewish adult who returned there after a long absence, Le Chambon offered keys to psychological and spiritual survival and growth, a new way of looking at myself and at others.

"Are a few flashes of light enough to illuminate the darkness?" Elie Wiesel has asked.

Since that is all there was, dear Elie Wiesel, does not the answer have to be yes?

To be sure, the challenge of goodness is an especially daunting one for scholarship.

"He who would do good to another," wrote Blake, "must do it in minute particulars."

Who records, who passes on such minute particulars?

Moreover, good may be inherently hard to analyze, hard even to remember; what comes naturally is harder to notice, harder to describe than what is twisted and aberrant.

The very process that develops mastery in thought, in articulation, in scholarliness, may become a stumbling block when it comes to an appreciation of the nature of good deeds, just as it has not proven to be the most effective tool for moral progress--as the Holocaust devastatingly demonstrated.

Indeed, "It takes a great deal of elevation of thought," Emerson observed, "to produce a very little elevation of life."

The righteous didn't think about what they were doing; they did it. I think about what they did, and I don't do it. Yet only in my life, not in academic papers, can I compellingly demonstrate that I take their message seriously.

Eva Héritier, daughter of rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust, holding Jewish infant Pierre Sauvage in 1944. Her parents play an important role in "*Weapons of the Spirit*," Sauvage's feature documentary about the wartime Christian oasis of Le Chambon, France.

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"We feel in one world," said Proust, "we think and name in another. Between the two we can set up a system of references, but we cannot bridge the gap."

Encounters with evil deaden feeling, while encounters with good revitalize it.

Why then have we so stubbornly avoided these encounters? Why have we relegated the good and the strong to the footnotes of history? Why have we so persistently turned away from the light?

Are we perhaps simply afraid of that light, afraid of what it may illuminate, afraid of its challenge?

Do we not sometimes wallow in guilt and failure less as a result of some past defeat than as an excuse not to have to try again?

Could it be that the overbearing emphasis on human ineffectiveness during the Holocaust also serves as the ultimate and crafty excuse we seek for not facing the facts of our own continuing, individual accountability?

Could it be because next to evil, we tend to come out looking good?

Could it be because next to good, we may be forced to ask ourselves questions we would prefer to avoid?

But can we afford not to learn these facts about our history and about human nature?

Do we Jews not need to know that the whole world did *not* stand idly by while we were slaughtered? Do we not need to know who our friends were then--and who they may be today, and tomorrow?

Do Christians not need to know that even then, there *were* Christians, there was at least one Christian village?

Does everyone not need to know that it is possible to act well even under the most trying circumstances?

Do we not need the memory of the just in order to improve and enrich our human spirit, that is to say, our connections with ourselves, that is to say, our connections with others?

Do we not need it to challenge the gnawing, widespread cynicism about our species?

Do we not need it to rebuild trust?

An Israeli Holocaust survivor, writing in Los Angeles' B'nai B'rith Messenger, recently stated that he had learned his lesson from the *Shoah*: "It is that Jews must never trust anyone but themselves to ensure their survival."

That one must depend on oneself for survival is, of course, true.

That one must never trust *anyone but oneself* is, in my view, utterly wrong, and the statement takes on a tragic resonance in the light of Israel's current policy for survival.

Erik Erikson has written that "If you have forgotten how to trust, you may be driven to cultivate active mistrust and insist defiantly that everybody is against you."

Trust, on the other hand, is merely hope in the other's sense of human solidarity and personal responsibility.

Whatever the tragedies in one's past, whatever the challenges in one's present, to rule out that hope is to live alone; to rule out that hope is simply to give up.

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A person who cannot trust is untrustworthy. A Jew who will not trust is not tapping into the spiritual momentum of Judaism.

"To be a Jew after Auschwitz," Emil Fackenheim has written, "is to have wrested hope--for the Jew and for the world--from the abyss of total despair."

Times are changing. It took forty years.

Until recently, the historical consensus was that there were only three major protagonists in the drama of the Holocaust--the murderers, the victims, and the bystanders--but there is no longer any Holocaust conference where the matter of righteous Gentiles doesn't come up.

Jewish organizations are beginning to tie themselves in to the issue. The name Raoul Wallenberg has become famous, and Le Chambon too is no doubt on its way to a celebrity status it fears greatly.

I am sure both the upcoming United States Holocaust Museum in Washington and the Simon Wiesenthal Center's future Beit Hashoah/Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles will include prominent references to this or that act of rescue.

Jerusalem's Yad Vashem, which holds high the Jewish flame by honoring righteous Gentiles along the Avenue of the Righteous, may eventually acknowledge their existence in their museum displays as well.

For some, this is an ominous development.

For some Holocaust survivors, there is the desire that the world feel guilty--and the fear that the world will use the righteous to feel less guilty, to let itself off the hook.

But the actual guilty ones are dying just as the survivors are dying, and even Eichmann's grandchildren are not, in fact, guilty of anything (although it can fairly be expected of them that they manifest a heightened sense of responsibility).

Moreover, to let itself off the hook all the world needs to do is to ignore the Holocaust, to act and talk as if it had no real relevance to us today.

But is there nevertheless a risk that we will indeed "take the edge off the Holocaust," falsify the record by sweetening it, dilute the haunting truth of our moral dereliction?

As Michael Berenbaum has asked, are we beginning to "Americanize" the Holocaust by bringing to it an American proclivity to focus on the silver lining rather than the cloud? Are we looking for "*cheap grace*," for "easy sources of consolation"?

I think that view underestimates the righteous, underestimates the contagious power of good.

Authentic moral witness discourages evasion in others. Indeed, far from exploiting or distorting such witness, those who wish to continue evading challenging facts have the sense to steer clear of such testimony.

The Roman Catholic Church, for instance, for all its vague, occasional references to instances of Catholic rescue, sadly continues to display very little real interest in playing up and confronting the actual deeds and beliefs of its righteous Catholics, even those who became martyrs to their faith in the process of helping the Jews.

Until Philip Hallie published "Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed" in 1979, virtually nobody had ever heard of Le Chambon, and it took a Jew to write the story.

To play up true Christian witness is to face the magnitude of Christian apostasy.

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The existence of authentic righteous Christians cannot be used to whitewash Christianity because these were Christians who believed that their faith had to express itself in deeds, and they know--and we know--that religion all too easily let's itself get away with mere words.

Try to use a righteous Gentile to whitewash the world and you'll find that it simply doesn't work. That they were a distinct and small minority is inherent in their very stories, in their very witness.

We learn by example.

That is the way it begins. That is the way it continues.

Examples of authentic righteousness breed righteousness; they cannot have the opposite effect of creating self-righteousness and falsehood.

However, I see a different sort of risk in the growing celebrity status of rescuers during the Holocaust. It is that we will use another ploy in our human grab bag of avoidance tricks and shunt them aside as super-heroes, as saints, as icons.

All of us who have focused special efforts on righteous Gentiles know how wasteful, how inaccurate that would be.

People who act well, even people who risk their lives to help others, are normal people like you and me.

What they do is not beyond our reach.

Let's learn from them rather than celebrate them. Let's not put them on pedestals so we can tip our hats and ignore them. Let us learn to view them as people with a solid, productive grasp on life, not as incarnations of the sort of fairy-tale virtues we tend to preach and ignore.

"There are no great men," said Winston Churchill, "only ordinary men facing a great challenge."

To be sure, we're going to feel increasingly guilty about how little we've cared about them, how little we've thanked them, how little we've worried about their own well-being after the war and still today. To be sure, they deserve our gratitude.

But they know, as Emerson put it, that "The reward of a thing well done is to have done it."

So let us be careful with our praise, with our award-giving, with our monument-building, and of course with our movies. Let us preserve the essential simplicity and naturalness of these people, of such conduct.

Let us not duck the essential message of the rescuers which is identical, as I see it, to the most fundamental message of the Holocaust: we are responsible for what we do on earth.

Richard Rubenstein and John Roth begin their recent book "Approaches to Auschwitz" with the apt words of Hannah Arendt: "Comprehension . . . means . . . examining and bearing consciously the burden which our century has placed on us--neither denying its existence nor submitting meekly to its weight."

We are responsible for not letting history beat us down--when it is occurring or as we remember it later on.

André Trocmé, the late pastor of Le Chambon, was a man who lived his whole, eloquent, pacifist's life in furtherance of his Christian ideals.

Yet he confided to his unpublished memoirs that his faith was, ultimately, a faith in the possibility of good on earth, "without which," he added, "the

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theoretical existence of God doesn't interest me."

Yes, "The Holocaust is primarily about defeat not about victory, about tragedy and not triumph, about failure not success," as Michael Berenbaum has found it necessary to underscore. Yes, it suggests, "the failure of the human spirit."

And yet, must we not also rediscover, stress, and prove--even while addressing the Holocaust, especially while addressing the Holocaust--that the ultimate triumph of the human spirit remains within our grasp?

As human beings, as parents, as descendants and ancestors, we have fundamental responsibilities here, and we were long ago admonished to take them on:

"I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

Henri and Emma Héritier, here posing in 1944 outside their farm in the village of Le Chambon, France, were among the rescuers of the area who sheltered 5,000 Jews during the Nazi occupation, as told in "Weapons of the Spirit," Pierre Sauvage's new feature documentary.

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Pierre Sauvage, director of "*Weapons of the Spirit*," in the ruins of the farmhouse in Le Chambon, France, where he was born during the Nazi occupation. Sauvage and his parents were among the 5,000 Jews sheltered in this unique Christian oasis during the Holocaust.

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Jewish and Christian youth at play during the winter of 1944 in Nazi-occupied France, as shown in "*Weapons of the Spirit*," Pierre Sauvage's feature documentary about the unique, wartime Christian oasis of Le Chambon, France.

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TEN THINGS I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT IN LE CHAMBON AND ELSEWHERE DURING THE HOLOCAUST

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ABSTRACT

This essay suggests ten questions which people doing research about Gentile rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust should try to answer: 1) Just how Christian were these rescuers of Jews? 2) What sort of Christianity did they practice? 3) Can we learn something about nonviolent resistance from the rescuers? 4) Do conventional male values limit our perspective on resistance to the Holocaust? 5) How determinant was the sense of being socially marginal to the sense of active empathy for the plight of the Jews? 6) If self-esteem was characteristic of the rescuers, then how did they succeed in developing it in themselves and from their upbringing? 7) How do we learn to view the rescuers as ordinary people whom we can emulate rather than as inimitable saints? 8) How important is historical memory in the genesis of righteous conduct? 9) How does one recognize leaders in a time of moral decay and what form does their leadership take? 10) Did communal rescue efforts result because people placed their trust in the beneficence of collective responsibility or from an understanding that collective responsibility can only occur when there is individual responsibility?

Address by Pierre Sauvage, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council conference "Faith in Humankind: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust," Washington, D.C., September 19, 1984. Sauvage's feature documentary film about Le Chambon, "Weapons of the Spirit," is available from Friends of Le Chambon.

One day fifty years ago, a young French pastor arrived with his wife and children in what seemed to these cosmopolitan city people a rather sleepy mountain community.

The new parish had, however, one promising feature, which the pastor, André Trocmé, described in a letter to an American friend.

In Le Chambon, Trocmé wrote, "the old Huguenot spirit is still alive. The humblest peasant home has its Bible and the father reads it every day. So these people who do not read the papers but the Scriptures do not stand on the moving soil of opinion but on the rock of the Word of God."

Time would soon prove just how right he was.

Le Chambon has affected my own life twice, and I'm no longer certain which of the two times is the most important.

It was in Le Chambon that I was born, in March 1944, a Jewish baby lucky to see the light of day in a place on earth singularly committed to his survival. This, at the very time when much of my family was disappearing into the abyss.

But it is only in the last few years that I have come to sense, in my bones and in my soul, the importance of what it is the people of Le Chambon and others like them tell us about *ourselves.*

If only we can learn to listen. If only we can recognize our need.

This, above all, is what I have learned so far: We need to know about the righteous Gentiles of the Holocaust far more than they need our gratitude.

We need to know how it is possible that some five thousand Jews *were* helped, *were* sheltered, *were* escorted to safety by some five thousand Christians of the area of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon.

And thus I ask ten questions about the people of Le Chambon and other rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust, questions that suggest ten areas of interdisciplinary, interreligious research and reflection that are at the top of the agenda of the Friends of Le Chambon Foundation.

1. Le Chambon is on a windswept, wintry plateau in the mountains of southcentral France. Most of the people of the area were the descendants of Huguenots, committed Christians who had clung to their land and their beliefs despite persecution and slaughter.

Aristotle asserts that the true nature of anything is the highest it can become.

But for a Jew, that is a particularly difficult criteria to apply to

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FLC # 37

Christianity during the Holocaust.

Given that the Holocaust occurred in the heart of Christian Europe and would not have been possible without the apathy or complicity of most Christians and without the virulent tradition of antisemitism that had long infested the very soul of Christianity, are we nonetheless to view these Christians of Le Chambon and other caring Christians of that time as rare but legitimately representative embodiments of exemplary Christian faith or merely as marginal, possibly accidental successes of a disastrously ineffective one?

To summarize, just how *Christian* were they?

2. However much the psychologists and the social scientists and traumatized secular Jews such as me will wish to minimize the spiritual and religious and hence not scientifically accessible dimensions of righteous conduct during the Holocaust, the evidence will, I submit, spill out, and will inevitably generate fundamental questions about the essential nature and specific characteristics of the religious faith of the righteous Christians.

What were their distinctive religious attitudes and perceptions? What did they, what did the peasants and villagers of Le Chambon, understand that so tragically eluded their Christian brethren from the Pope on down?

Could it be, for instance, that the righteous Christians were, in particular, Christians who were comfortable with the Jewish roots of their faith, indeed with the Jewishness of Jesus? Were they Christians for whom Christianity was, perhaps, more the religion *of* Jesus than the religion *about* Jesus?

This appears to have been remarkably the case in Le Chambon, where a number of Jews never got over their astonishment at being not only sheltered but *welcomed* as the People of God, and where Judaism was also sheltered to some extent and not just persecuted people who happened to have been Jews.

By the way, among the ramifications of this question for today are the fact that we live in a time when some surprising Christians are proclaiming their love for the Jews and for Israel, while many and possibly most Jews doubt that such a love could have any genuine basis. I would like to suggest that if we Jews knew more about who our friends were then, we might find new ways of knowing who they might be today and tomorrow.

In other words, just what sort of Christians were the righteous Christians of the Holocaust?

117

3. Both André Trocmé and assistant pastor Edouard Theis were determined pacifists.

"The responsibility of Christians," they proclaimed in church during Sunday services the very day after the armistice with Nazi Germany was signed, "is to resist the violence that will be brought to bear on their consciences through the weapons of the spirit."

What can we learn from the dramatic effectiveness of these weapons in Le Chambon?

If it is true, as the American Roman Catholic bishops proclaimed in their important pastoral letter on war and peace, that "Nonviolent means of resistance to evil deserve much more study and consideration than they have thus far received," are not Le Chambon and the righteous Gentiles of the Nazi era—including a number of caring, devout Catholics in whom the Church thus far has shown very little interest—are not they the obvious place to begin?

And to my fellow Jews I would also like to ask this: Independently even of our share of responsibility in the survival of humanity in this most perilous time in history, do we not have a special incentive to be interested in the *only* weapons that were specifically and productively used by others at that time to save some of us?

Can we learn something useful about nonviolent resistance from the Holocaust, despite the pervasive contrary assumption?

4. In Le Chambon as elsewhere, women played a key role in rescue. It was often women who were faced with the first all-important decisions as to whether or not to take a stranger into their kitchens and into their homes, a stranger whose presence could imperil the lives of their families. Certainly, the women of Le Chambon were the backbone of much of what occurred there.

Could it be that one reason we have been taught so little about righteous Gentiles is that so-called higher education is so dominated by distorting male values, and that it is easier for male historians to get excited over the sometimes meaningless clatter of military hardware than about manifestations of spiritual resistance, even when this resistance produced much more tangible results?

Do conventional male values limit our perspective on resistance to the Holocaust?

5. The people of Le Chambon, as Protestants in a Catholic country, were no doubt especially sensitive to the oppression of minorities, and I hasten to add that the Catholics in Le Chambon, a minority within a minority, as it happens, joined actively in the rescue effort.

118

Just how important, just how determinant was this sense of being a minority to the sense of active empathy that developed?

Is not every single one of us a minority of one sort or another, and could it be that many of the righteous Gentiles had a greater sense of this even before they joined the tiny minority of people who resisted the persecution of the Jews?

6. The moment I became interested in righteous conduct, I had to start rethinking my vocabulary.

I am hardly enthusiastic about the word "righteous" in English, for instance, given that too many people hear "self-righteous."

Even the word "Gentile" suggests an emphasis that for my part I do not really intend. I'm interested in righteous people and righteous conduct, not in non-Jews per se. (I also do not like the inadvertent implication that there weren't some equally remarkable Jews implementing similar values, about whom, incidentally, we know even less than about the Gentiles.) But words such as "righteous" and "Gentile" appear unavoidable at this stage, and perhaps they can be shaped to meet our needs.

Other words, however, are dangerous and must be jettisoned.

To give just one example that I believe raises a crucial issue, I have become convinced that the adjective "selfless" precludes any understanding of the people it is misleadingly used to praise.

I am among those who suspect that Hitler and Eichmann may have suffered from what could be termed, a particularly dreadful form of selflessness—but not the people of Le Chambon.

And if it is indeed true, in Le Chambon and elsewhere, that it was on the contrary a very secure, very anchored sense of self—a spontaneous access to the core of their being—that resulted in a natural and irresistible proclivity to see the truth and act upon it, if it is indeed true that many or all of the righteous Gentiles of the Holocaust displayed this characteristic psychological solidity, then a question arises that my wife and I face all the time as we raise our young son: How does one nurture that powerful and benevolent a sense of self-esteem?

If self-esteem was indeed a characteristic of the righteous, then how did they succeed in developing it? What was special about their upbringing?

7. It is a rare righteous Gentile who believes that there was something remarkable about his or her own courage.

The people of Le Chambon through their individual and collective actions were endangering the lives of each and every one of them and yet, there too, the risks are acknowledged but not

considered to have been a very important part of the decision-making process. "One gets used to the risks," is how a peasant woman who helped my parents and me dismissed the question I put to her about this issue in my film about Le Chambon, "Weapons of the Spirit."

We tend to interpret this reaction as mere modesty, but could it be that courage is something that everybody except the courageous themselves attaches importance to?

Could it be that whenever we overemphasize the courage of the righteous we do not communicate anything about it or increase its presence in our midst because courage cannot help but come naturally when we feel the need to generate it and will not come at all if singled out for special attention while being detached from its reasons for emerging?

A glib reference to the courageous, selfless people of Le Chambon may thus have a hollow ring to our ears—and generate no real interest in these people—because such words correspond to empty concepts.

Perhaps the real, subconscious intent of such vocabulary is in fact to make such people seem essentially different from you and me and thus not really, challengingly relevant to our daily lives.

The question is: How do we learn to view the people of Le Chambon and others like them merely as people with a solid, productive grasp on life, and not as incarnations of fairy-tale virtues which we can then preach and/or ignore?

8. The people of Le Chambon remembered a lot, about their heritage and about other important things as well.

The Bible, by which I refer to what Christians designate as the Old Testament but which the people of Le Chambon knew well, is, among other things, an exaltation of memory.

Just how important is memory in the genesis of righteous conduct?

I might ask in passing how much do we here in America truly remember how many of our ancestors came here to escape oppression of one sort or another?

If Americans had remembered better at the time of the Holocaust—if they had also remembered the oppression of the native Americans and the still almost unfathomable viciousness of the slavery inflicted on blacks—would not the State Department where we gather have been pressured to help the persecuted of Europe instead of being allowed, as Elie Wiesel has aptly reminded us, to slam the door on them?

Were all havens of refuge for Jews during the Holocaust havens of memory, just as in Le Chambon?

9. Traditional, hierarchical leadership was largely absent among Christians when it came to resisting the appeal of Nazism.

But is it not true that we only have the leaders that we deserve?

And should we be so hasty as to disregard the possibility that leaders of an untraditional sort may have emerged during that time and that it may be at least in part a matter of whether we are capable of recognizing who they were?

How *does* one recognize leaders in a time of moral decay? What form does their leadership take?

Are these not pressing questions for us today?

What sort of leaders did the dynamics of collective rescue produce in Le Chambon and what can we learn from the remarkable effectiveness of André and Magda Trocmé, for instance?

10. Finally, it appears that the people of Le Chambon often did not know what their neighbors were doing, in terms of rescue. They barely if ever talked about it at the time, and did not talk about it after the war when the Jews left. Although there certainly were some overtly collective actions undertaken in the area, the conspiracy of goodness that occurred was in important respects a tacit and unspoken one.

Yes, one might say that there was a *minyan* in Le Chambon, an instance of communal righteousness such as did not occur on this scale, for this length of time, anywhere else in occupied Europe.

But did it result from these people placing their trust in the beneficence of collective responsibility or from their understanding that collective responsibility can only occur when there is individual responsibility, and that you cannot get anywhere if you do not begin with individual responsibility, that is, with yourself?

And since that probably is merely a rhetorical question, then let me ask this: if both individual and collective responsibility begin with the notion that it is indeed better to light one candle than to curse the darkness, then how do they ultimately differ?

Albert Camus, whose allegorical novel "The Plague" was conceived and begun in the area of Le Chambon at that time, has his narrator say this:

"There always comes a time in history when the man who dares to say that two plus two equals four is punished with death . . . . And the issue is not a matter of what reward or what punishment will be the outcome of that reasoning. The issue is simply whether or not two plus two equals four. For those of our townspeople who were then risking their lives, the decision they had to make was simply whether or not they were in the midst of

a plague and whether or not it was necessary to struggle against it."

The challenge for us now is to learn to understand this "banality of goodness" even during the Holocaust—and to recognize that to care about other people is also to care about yourself.

Pierre Sauvage is both a child survivor of the Holocaust and a child of Holocaust survivors. He was born and sheltered in the French village of Le Chambon which served as a haven for five thousand Jews during World War Two. An Emmy Award-winning filmmaker (*Yiddish: the Mame Loshn*), Sauvage is now completing a feature documentary about his historic birthplace. He is also the founder of the Friends of Le Chambon, "a non-profit charitable foundation devoted to fostering an understanding of righteous conduct during the Nazi era."

FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON

During the Holocaust, the Christian population of the area of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in France sheltered five thousand Jews. Friends of Le Chambon, Inc. is a nonprofit charitable foundation devoted to fostering an understanding of righteous conduct during the Nazi era.

FLC #18

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"ON BEING A CHILD OF THE HOLOCAUST"

ADDRESS BY PIERRE SAUVAGE ON BEHALF OF THE SECOND GENERATION

FIRST WESTERN STATES REGIONAL CONFERENCE
OF THE AMERICAN GATHERING OF JEWISH
HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

March 11, 1984, © Friends of Le Chambon

I am grateful to the Sons and Daughters of the 1939 Club for having asked me to represent them here today. It is indeed as a child of survivors that I will speak to you now--from my heart, and based on my own experience and my own understanding of that experience at this particular stage of my life.

Elie Wiesel, whose upcoming novel about the Holocaust portrays, for the first time, the world of a child of survivors, has written to us, the children, that ours is privileged generation.

Privileged to have been born? Yes, we know that--sometimes we feel that we know it all too well.

Privileged to have you--survivors--as parents? Yes.

Privileged to have to try to come to terms with the history that spawned us, and thus with what is, after all, the most relevant, the most symptomatic historical, spiritual, psychological, religious, political and human event of our time--not just for Jews, but for the children of the murderers and the apathetic bystanders as well, and indeed for the threatened civilization in which we all live?

Yes, that obligation to remember, however painful, however burdensome, is a privilege too, a privilege for which some of us may never escape feeling chosen.

"It is impossible for the physician to heal," one of the Chassidic masters once stressed, during another difficult time for Judaism, "if he does not open up the wound and lay bare its evil." We are closer to that wound that anybody except you, the survivors, and when you are gone many of us will be haunted by our increased responsibility.

But we will not be equal to the task, and many of us--some of the best of us--will continue to run away from this whole "Holocaust business," if we do not begin, you and especially us, to confront head-on and thus even publicly, the fact that we your children were victims of the Holocaust in our own right, that we are still victims of the Holocaust, and that one important cause of our still under-recognized and under-identi-

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fied drama is completely different from your own and is only indirectly related to the relatives that we lost or the shallowness of our new cultural roots.

The particular and fundamental hardship that I want to zero in on is very difficult to bring up in your presence, to approach, to recognize, to acknowledge, because it came, unwittingly, at your hands, despite your best intentions.

Please believe that this is just as uncomfortable for me to say as for you to hear. I know how deeply you care about your children. I know how much they represent for you. Indeed, only now, as the father of David Sauvage, age 3½--who is, of course, along with my wife, the most important member of this audience--am I able to get a sense of the challenging nature of parental love and to measure how unlikely I am to do all that much better than anybody else, certainly than you, given the almost inconceivable additional psychological challenges you faced after the war.

But how can I not, in all good conscience, use this unique opportunity to speak my mind, to the best of my ability, far better to be sure than I am capable of doing in my own parents' home.

And thus I must try to convey to you what I have come to believe is a core difficulty for children of survivors, a difficulty originating in your relationship to us. The overall psychological concept involved here has been most compellingly developed by the Swiss psychoanalyst Alice Miller in a book called "Prisoners of Childhood." The effects of the Holocaust are not even mentioned in the book, but its application to children of survivors would be roughly as follows.

During that all-important time when we were really children and made our first crucial attempts to separate from you, we needed those attempts to be accepted, to be validated, to be encouraged. This process called individuation is a tricky one for every child. In our particular case, because of your own virtually unavoidable needs given the traumatizing series of monumental losses that you had been subjected to, it was especially difficult for you not to experience our budding autonomy as yet another potential or actual loss.

And thus our greatest challenge became figuring out where we begin and where you end, something that evolves naturally out of an ideal parent-child relationship.

Things did not get easier when we reached adolescence, where another crucial transition awaited us. Erik Erikson, who is widely considered as the foremost expert on the concept of identity, has compared the young person to a trapeze artist who "in the middle of vigorous motion must let go of his safe hold on childhood and reach out for a firm grasp on adulthood, depending for a breathless interval on a relatedness between the past and the future, and on the reliability of those he must let go of, and those who will 'receive' him."

Is that why I sometimes feel that I'm still in mid-air? For us,

easily
none of the desirable conditions for/catching that slippery bar of adulthood were present. There was great discontinuity between the past and the future. Those who had to let go of us, you our parents, could not do so with confidence. And those who were to receive us, our peers, could hardly be expected to help us work through problems that were so foreign to them and that we ourselves were not even consciously aware of.

The lingering difficulties for us can be buried very deep and their symptoms can seem paradoxical. But the ramifications of all this are still unfolding, in my home and in yours and in the homes of your children.

And one thing is clear: we your children must work especially hard at becoming ourselves.

We must recognize the distorting effects of the Holocaust but we must stop there.

Some of us will go further backwards in order to go forward. Some of us, in our quest to build healthy, confident identities for ourselves and thus also for our children will have to bypass your trauma at times in order to connect with what we were before we were born. That is to say with the religion and culture that spawned us too, elsewhere, before we were cast adrift in this misleadingly comfortable culture we call home.

And thus, though we must also strive to draw you out and to listen closely to you--listen to your fundamental testimony--strive to understand everything that shaped you and everything you now believe about the world since all of that also shaped us and is likely to go on shaping our children and probably theirs, still we cannot and we must not allow ourselves to let your experience and your testimony dwarf, or merge with our experience and our testimony.

This above all else I believe. If we are to carry the torch of memory symbolically handed to the second generation at the World Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in Jerusalem in 1981 then we must find our own ways of understanding what exactly that torch represents. Our own ways, reflecting our own needs--not yours. If we fail to do that, we will simply not carry that torch very far or very high.

And all of this has led directly, as far as I personally am concerned, to the few who cared during those uncaring times, the demonstrable existence of whom helps motivate me to want to help carry that torch and constitutes the only lesson of the Holocaust that I do not dread conveying to my very young son, that I am indeed eager to convey to him.

Let me be clear. Like everyone else, in approaching the Holocaust we the Second Generation must start by viewing the night that descended on you from our closest mental approximation of the perspective of the crematoria as more than one million children like my own son were being allowed to go up in flames. We cannot elude that central challenge to any belief in man or in God or else we will simply be building on quicksand.

"But if you gaze down into the abyss," said Nietzsche, not anticipating anything remotely approaching the Holocaust, "the abyss may enter into you."

I fear that we your children are more vulnerable than most to not emerging whole from that look into the abyss. Is that not one reason why so many of us won't look at all? And thus perhaps even more than most people, especially most young people, we need to know that even then --especially then--God provided reasons for hope amid all the reasons for despair.

And thus I personally take comfort in learning not just about the evil and apathy that stunted all our lives but also about the inspiring good that did crop up here and there, the good which admittedly has especial resonance for me since I may owe my own existence to the good fortune that brought my parents--my pregnant mother, a Jew from Bialystok, Poland, married to a Jew from Eastern France--to the devoutly Christian oasis of the area of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in France, a Protestant enclave where five thousand Jews <u>were</u> saved. By five thousand Christians.

And to those of you who feel deep down that these <u>chassidei umot ha'olam</u>, these mysterious righteous among the nations, may have a place in the world to come, as our faith insists, but that they should be mentioned only fleetingly, as is the case today, at a gathering of Holocaust survivors. That it is more urgent to focus public attention on the crackpots spouting antisemitic graffiti about the Holocaust than on the deeds and motivations of those who somehow recognized the evil then for what it was and resisted it. That the full-scale and riveting presence of this "saving remnant" in our Holocaust memorials and perspective will undermine the memory of our dead rather than help to sanctify it. To those of you, in other words, who are scared that fully acknowledging the significance of the few who cared will detract from the culpability of the many who didn't, I can only say this:

I understand your concern, but there is simply no evidence that this is or need be the case. I think instead that we are not availing ourselves of an invaluable tool to help the world remember and learn from the Holocaust, an invaluable tool to allow us your children to penetrate your nightmare without giving in to the sense of despair that comes all too easily to us.

I beg your indulgence for this difficult and candid speech. Please consider that to honor our father and our mother is not necessarily to remain silent when the time to speak has come.

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Pierre Sauvage finds the de-Judaization of Jesus to be the most disturbing element of 'The Last Temptation'

Jesus as a goy

THERE WAS NO picket line to cross, but my fellow moviegoers and I no doubt shared a feeling of defiance as we filed in to see *The Last Temptation of Christ* at its second screening on the day it opened in Los Angeles.

Protesters held up signs, sang gospel songs, occasionally sought to win us over in bursts of conversation. At the head of the line, a friendly young proselytizer extending his hand in greeting over the rope, asked my name, and pointed out that there were better ways to Jesus than this movie.

"I don't need Jesus," I said, as I walked into the movie theatre. "I'm Jewish."

Indeed, much of my family was murdered by the sons of Christians around the time of my birth while other Christians had looked on. It hadn't even mattered that Jesus, too, a fellow Jew, would have been gassed in Auschwitz along with my grandmother.

Today, yet again, we were being accused of going after him – of having made him a "wimp."

And yet, despite the alarming stench of anti-Semitism – and the essential wrong-headedness of the campaign against the film – I was not wholly unsympathetic to the protesters. I think there are understandable reasons why Last Temptation, sight unseen, has become the last straw for some Christians.

There is no denying that for many years now, American movies and television have largely disregarded the values and lifestyle of large numbers of religiously involved Americans. Adding insult to injury, the industry continues to serve up increasingly brazen dollops of moral know-nothingness in the guise of entertainment.

Furthermore, as a filmmaker myself, I am not unmindful that we Jews are being increasingly singled out for our not insubstantial contribution to this state of affairs.

SO AS THE lights dimmed and the walkie-talkie-armed ushers up front faded into the sidelines, the questions swirling around in my head were not only, "Is this a good movie?" and "Is it really offensive for Christians?" There was also that seemingly ageless lament: "Is it good for the Jews?"

What unfolded at some length was a coherently eccentric vision, designed and executed with as much dedication and skill as medieval artists must have applied to those wan, ethereal religious portraits that seem so remote to us today.

This is fiercely committed, sincere filmmaking. The movie commands respect with its power and beauty even as you begin to recognize what you are seeing: Jesus as the Great Neurotic, less a wimp than a Hamlet, perhaps, but racked with fear and doubt, and unceasingly questioning himself about his own identity, conduct and appointed role.

The Jesus of Last Temptation, torn by the struggle between the human and the divine, between the flesh and the spirit, was what I had half-expected: a modernist, metaphorical, me-generation portrait of a saviour you can "relate" to.

What I had not been prepared for, however, was my growing discomfort at the film's casual falsification of one key aspect of Jesus's life. This fearless, very contemporary film turns out to be yet another old-fashioned, conventionally expurgated depiction of Jesus as goy.

To be sure, he is called "rabbi" half-a-dozen times, and once fleetingly derogated as a "Jewish politician."

But in the context of what we see of him and his world, the references make no sense, any more than the incongruous close-up of the menora at that last Passover seder.

More even than in the New Testament, Jesus is portrayed as unconnected to his Jewish mother, drawing no strength and sustenance from his Jewish environment, cut off from his Jewish cultural and spiritual roots.

This is no minor matter for Jews, or indeed for increasing numbers of Christians.

OVER THE centuries, the de-Judaizing of Jesus has allowed for the most violent and heinous of distinctions to be made between Jesus and his people. It has also robbed Christians of fundamental insights into their faith.

As it happens, that de-Judaizing underlies the very core of the movie at its most controversial and fanciful: the anachronistic attribution of Christianity-induced inner conflicts to Christ himself. As a man of his time, whatever his reasons for remaining a bachelor, Jesus would not – and indeed surely did not – experience any such agonizing conflict between spirit and flesh.

That conflict (no doubt the essence of the 1955 Nikos Kazantzakis novel on which the film is based) takes on its most perplexing dimension only as one realizes that the film has no intention of providing anything else to think about – no moral enlightenment, no convincing illustration of religious teaching or leadership, indeed no sense of worship or the power of spiritual beliefs.

Righteousness, Last Temptation ultimately seems to say, lies merely in the experiencing of inner struggle, not in the joyous accomplishment of God's will. And that flies in the face of what I have come to know from some of Jesus' disciples, Christians who remained true to themselves and their beliefs at a time when Christian apostasy was running rampant in Nazi-occupied Europe.

I'm alive today because even then, there were such true-life Christians.

I've come to know them because I've just spent five years making a film about them – a Jewish film in praise of the people who welcomed me into the world. For it happens that I was born and sheltered in a mostly Huguenot community in the mountains of France: There, in and around the village of Le Chambon, some 5,000 Christians defied the Nazis and their French accomplices, taking in my parents and me, and some 5,000 other Jews.

I learned that there had been no great inner struggle. No agonized sleepless nights. No momentous debate over the Big Decision. You just did what you had to do. As if nothing else was possible. Without looking upon it as any big deal.

Le Chambon took us in, as one Jewish refugee put it, because these Christians were "the most solid people on earth" – rooted in their families, rooted in their heritage, rooted in their land, rooted, yes, even in the Jewish roots of their faith.

"God is not an Israelite," Jesus shouts to the Jewish high priests, in one of the film's most disturbing contributions to artistic exegesis of the New Testament.

I couldn't help thinking of the very different words of pastor André Trocmé, spiritual leader of Le Chambon during the war: "Let us never forget that the God of Jesus Christ was the God of Israel. The Christian faith dissolves into mythology as soon as it no longer leans upon Judaism. Nothing can be lost by rejudaizing Christianity."

"By their fruits ye shall know them," said Jesus himself, according to Scripture.

If he had anything to do with inspiring the actions of the good Christians of Le Chambon and others like them, he could not have been the tortured, rootless soul of *The Last Temptation of Christ.*

The writer is an Emmy Award-winning documentary filmmaker. His film about Le Chambon, Weapons of the Spirit, *won the 1988 Los Angeles Film Critics' Best Documentary Award and will be released in Paris in January.*

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A MOST PERSISTENT HAVEN: LE CHAMBON-SUR-LIGNON

The story of 5,000 who would not be bystanders—and of 5,000 more

PIERRE SAUVAGE

I am a 39 year-old European-born Jew, which means that around the time of my birth, much of my family was humiliated, tortured and murdered in the Nazi death camps. As the world watched.

But the specific world into which I was born is a place called Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, in France. There I was born; there I was welcomed into this life; there the others did not watch, but reached out their hands.

And today, 39 years later, I am the father of a three year-old boy, to whom I shall one day have to explain what happened in those days, in those places. What shall I tell him of the world, and of the ways of the world with the Jews?

Once, while preparing to make a documentary—I am a filmmaker—I did quite a bit of research on the reasons why Auschwitz wasn't bombed. There are, it turns out, many answers to that question, all of them disturbing. But I have no doubt that the most basic answer is that the world did not care enough.

Is that what I should tell Davíd, my son? Shall I then teach him that there is no purpose to be served in working and living with others, that anti-Semitism is our irreversible destiny?

Or perhaps I should avoid the matter altogether, let it be understood as an aberration that has no continuing relevance to our secular, assimilated lives?

I can do neither, for I was born in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, and so I *know* that in the midst of the carnage, there was decency, in the midst of the evil, good. I know more: I know that there are people, and always will be, whom even the most ferocious pressures cannot make into bystanders to human suffering.

So I am grateful to Le Chambon-sur-Lignon not only for my life, but also for my knowledge, which will one day be David's, too. And perhaps all the Davíds'.

At the start of the war, my parents, Barbara and Léo Sauvage, left Paris for Marseilles, in the then-unoccupied zone of southern France; from there, they moved to Nice, on the Riviera. But this was no time for dawdling in the sun. They had been lucky so far, especially since my mother is a Polish Jew, born in Bialystok, and was thus particularly vulnerable to being caught in a roundup of the kind the Vichy collaborationsists conducted frequently, or even by the Nazis themselves. (Father is a French Jew, from Lorraine, in eastern France.)

The beautiful French landscape, it should be remembered—as the French do not like to—was then scarred by dreadful internment camps. These were not extermination camps, but the conditions in the worst of these French-run camps were no better than those in many of the Nazi concentration camps in Germany and Poland. It was the French government of the time, headed by the immensely popular Marshal Pétain, that quietly dumped Jewish refugees into these camps. It was this French government that engaged in a vociferous and energetic anti-Semitic campaign of its own, and it was this government that efficiently cooperated with the Germans when the deportation orders came—the deportations "to the East," to the Final Solution. It was with the cooperation of this government, of its police and its bureaucracy, that some 80,000 men, women and children

Top: Eva Héritier holds the infant Pierre Sauvage.

Center: Survivors in Paris, after the war—Pierre Sauvage in his mother's arms, with cousin Samuel Pisar.

Bottom: Pierre Sauvage and his father in Le Chambon.

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were handed over to the mass murderers.

And so it was that my parents, a year after the large-scale deportations began, had to determine where to hide, where to go to have a child, a Jewish child.

It so happened that a Jewish friend of my parents knew of a mountain village in south-central France, not too far from Lyon, that he thought would be as good a gamble as any. Le Chambon-sur-Lignon was a Protestant enclave outside the mainstream of Catholic—or, for that matter, of secular—France. The people of the rural area of which Le Chambon was the centerpiece had not forgotten the persecution of their own Huguenot ancestors by the kings of France. Perhaps that memory would lead them to help protect the Sauvages from harm.

So my parents rented a room in a farmhouse in Le Chambon, and it was there, in March of 1944, that I was born, at a time when much of my mother's family was being slaughtered. (The tale of that particular slaughter is told in a book—*Of Blood and Hope*—written by my mother's nephew, my cousin, Samuel Pisar.)

But here and there throughout Europe there are other heart-warming stories of Jews being provided shelter. Why, then, call particular attention to Le Chambon?

Because during the course of the war the people of Le Chambon and the surrounding area took in some 5,000 Jews. Nowhere do we have a parallel to such a story. No one was turned away. No one was betrayed. No conversion was imposed. There was a need, and the 5,000 people of the area became—no one had any idea of it at the time—occupied Europe's most determined, most persistent haven of refuge for the Jews. A compelling ratio—one life preserved per local inhabitant. ("He who saves one life. . .")

And all this under Vichy's nose, within striking distance of the SS, with convalescing German soldiers walking the streets of Le Chambon during the last year. And there, in the newly-founded secondary school, the citizens of Le Chambon set aside a room for Jewish religious services, at which one of the Jewish teachers officiated.

So it was that in the midst of Christendom's most horrendous failure, these Christians of Le Chambon gave evidence of religion's capacity for good. The values of the Chambonnais did not permit them to turn away; theirs was a commitment anchored by and in their Christian faith. To the peasants and villagers of Le Chambon, Le Mazet, Fay and all the hamlets and isolated farms of the area, the biblical admonition to love one another was the bedrock Christian message, a message they could not ignore, no matter the risk, no matter the consequences. (Lest that message be obscured by the events of the day, the parish paper, at the very top of the first page, recalled that Jesus had said, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen.")

No agonizing, no intellectualizing, no rationalizing, no minimizing, no debating: Action. *Mitzvah*.

To the residents of Le Chambon, then as now, there was nothing remarkable in their behavior. And yet the rest of us know that it was most remarkable, that the fact that these people behaved as normal, decent human beings was an extraordinary fact. Shall we call it an aberration? Shall we fixate on the horror, and ignore the goodness? What shall we make of it, as a memory, as a legacy?

A place, a sequence of events largely ignored by historians, unstudied by sociologists, uncelebrated by the religious communities, Jewish or Christian, unchronicled by the media. One book—*Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*, by Philip Hallie, a professor of philosophy; and, quite recently, one award by the Hebrew Union College.

And now, a film, for that is how I have decided to inform the Davids of what happened, of what people can be. A film that records the faces, so many faces. . .

The Héritiers, a couple now in their 80s who lived up the road from where my parents and their baby were staying. Monsieur Héritier is the image of the wary French peasant—taciturn, disinclined towards any self-asserting

act or word. The notion that he and his wife were in any way heroic, special, is profoundly uncomfortable to both of them. They are not social activists; if the world is askew, that is the world's problem, not theirs. They do not stress their Christian upbringing or belief. They think what they did was "normal."

Normal for the Héritiers was that from the moment Jewish refugees started arriving in Le Chambon, there was always at least one Jew, usually more, at their kitchen table; there were always one or two Jewish children sharing skimpy accommodations with their own daughters. And when the children were escorted to safety in Switzerland, as happened, they asked for more children.

The Héritiers are embarrassed that anyone would want to interview them about anything, but they don't really feel that I am interviewing them, for they remember me and my parents well. There is a picture of me as a baby in their daughter Eva's arms, for she helped take care of me. Madame Héritier happily remembers that it was in their house that I learned to walk.

And Monsieur Héritier stares resolutely at the ground when I ask the expected question: "Why did you shelter Jews?" He's not going to tell me that he thinks the question meaningless, almost stupid. He merely shrugs his shoulders and says, "When people came, if we could be of help. . ." And the answer dangles. When I press, noting the risks they were taking, Madame Héritier looks up just long enough to say simply that one gets used to the risk. And then she looks down again, hoping I will not insist on answers she believes—erroneously—she does not have.

But the Héritiers were among those who took the greatest risks, for they knew full well that the young Jewish teenager whom they sheltered was spending his nights forging false identity papers for the Jews and the other refugees who flocked to Le Chambon. Those papers were essential for survival; towards the end, Monsieur Héritier hid the paraphernalia for producing them in his beehives. (Another villager hid the false papers in his mother's grave. And the young forger, who engaged in one of the most highly punishable of anti-Nazi offenses, survived the war; he is now a pediatrician in the outskirts of Paris.)

And Madame Barraud, who is 90, and is almost never at home because she's out all day visiting the old and the sick. "My husband and I didn't have *that* many Jews," she says—she whose pension was open to the hunted at any time of day or night.

And Madame Brottes, a member of a small fundamentališt sect who sits across the kitchen table from me and holds her head high as she proclaims that for her, as for many of the Christians of Le Chambon, the Jews were the people of God, the Chosen People, to whom she owed a special obligation. Madame Brottes, who took care of half a dozen Jews; a peasant woman caring, among others, for a Viennese doctor and his wife and child. Who, when one of "her" Jews was caught and sent to an internment camp, mailed him precious food packages every single week.

And what of Magda Trocmé, widow of the late pastor of Le Chambon, a legend in her own right, a whirlwind of non-stop practical activity, common sense, unflaggingly available, ideally matched to her idealistic and reflective husband? What a thrill it has been for me to meet and correspond with this woman!

The Trocmés had come to Le Chambon in 1934 after serving among workers in industrial northern France. They were a cosmopolitan couple, she half-Italian, half-Russian, he half-German, half-French. They had met in New York, where he was studying at Union Theological Seminary while tutoring David and Winthrop Rockefeller, in 1921. For them Le Chambon was a sleepy, backwater place—except for one thing, which André Trocmé wrote about to an American friend a few months after his arrival: "The old Huguenot spirit is still alive. The humblest peasant house has its Bible and the father reads it every day. So these people who do not read the papers but the scriptures do not stand on the moving soil of opinion but on the rock of the word of God." A few months later, he wrote—prophetically—that he thought he was going to be able to accomplish great

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Top: Pierre Sauvage returns to visit the Héritiers.
Center: The false papers of the young forger sheltered by the Héritiers.
Bottom: Marie Brottes, today.

things in Le Chambon.

Trocmé, a brilliant, inspiring man, had had difficulty finding a parish because he was a proclaimed conscientious objector, not—to put it mildly—an acceptable belief at the time. But the Trocmés had been to Germany in the early years of the Third Reich and had sensed what was coming. At one point, this Christian pacifist had seriously considered whether he had an inescapable moral obligation to take advantage of his fluency in German to penetrate Hitler's entourage and assassinate him. Ultimately, he decided that even this murder could not be sanctioned. But he remained passionately eager to demonstrate that there is nothing even remotely passive about pacifism.

The French armistice with Germany was signed on a Saturday evening. The very next morning, a morning when all France was heaving a sigh of relief, confident that the worst was at last over, Trocmé preached a sermon: "The duty of Christians is to respond to the violence that will be brought to bear on their consciences with the weapons of the spirit." ("*Les armes de l'esprit*" is, thus, the French title of my documentary.) "We will resist," Trocmé went on, "whenever our adversaries will demand of us compliance contrary to the orders of the Gospel. We will do so without fear, as well as without pride and without hate."

And for the next four years, that is exactly what happened in a tiny area of France.

And the Jews came to Le Chambon. They came because they chanced upon word of it—as in the case of my parents—or with the help of one of several admirable organizations, such as the American Quakers, who made use of Le Chambon's willingness—even eagerness—to take in both individuals and groups of Jews.

The effort was never coordinated. No person or group mobilized the villagers, the farmers, the peasants and the spiritual leaders of the area of Le Chambon into a coherent network. The people of the area are still amazed at how widespread the perilous hospitality was, are still surprised to learn that such and such a neighbor had *also* sheltered Jews. It was not a subject of discussion at the time, and it did not become a subject of discussion after the war ended and the Jews left to begin to reconstruct their lives.

There was a couple from Germany who had met and fallen in love as refugees in Paris. And then came the war, and they were separated, sent to different internment camps. In one of the worst, Gurs, the woman gave birth—it was August 1941—to a daughter, Eva. Then, avoiding calamity by way of the nearly routine miracle that marks the stories of so many of the survivors, mother and daughter were directed to Le Chambon. They made their way there under the auspices of the *Cimade*, a newly-founded organization of young French Protestant women that was ceaselessly active, throughout the war, in helping Jews, going so far even as to place volunteer workers inside the camps.

The man—the husband, the father—arrived in Le Chambon some time after his wife and daughter. He came late one afternoon, and that very night, there was a Gestapo raid on the house where they had *almost* stayed the night. (This was to prove the only successful raid of the war; while others were conducted, the villagers always managed to be alerted in time to send the Jews scurrying into the woods.) The couple and their daughter survived the war in Le Chambon, as did her sister and brother-in-law; today, they live just a few miles from my home in Los Angeles.

Among those caught in that Gestapo raid was a young cousin of André Trocmé, who had come to Le Chambon to run a children's home funded by the Quakers. In September 1942, he wrote a letter to his parents explaining why he was not going on for his doctorate, as his parents wanted, but was instead acceding to the pastor's request that he come take charge of this new home—at least half of whose wards were Jewish.

"I think it may be time for me to assume responsibilities with regard to other people. Le Chambon will be an education for me, and that shouldn't displease you. It is also something of a contribution to the reconstruction of our world." (*Tikun olam*, we call it.) "The future will tell me whether I was

Top: 1943: Pastor André Trocmé (tall man in the back row) visits the children's home run by Daniel Trocmé (back row, far right).

Center and bottom: The Coblentz family, urban French Jews, transform themselves into farmers in the Le Chambon area during the war.

equal to the task or not, and it will tell *only* me because it is not a matter of success in the eyes of the world. I have chosen Le Chambon not because it is an adventure but because I will thus be able not to be ashamed of myself."

And so for nine months Daniel Trocmé, in order not to be ashamed of himself, in order *l'taken olam*, devoted himself to some children. Until, in June of 1943, the Gestapo came and arrested him. On April 2, 1944, Daniel Trocmé died in Maidanek.

Young Trocmé was one of the few martyrs of Le Chambon. Roger Le Forestier was another, a devout Christian physician who had served with Albert Schweitzer in Africa and then, still a young man, followed his commitment to Le Chambon in the early 1940s. In 1944, he was very concerned about the serious problem pregnancy of one of the Jewish women under his care. His professional expertise and his personal devotion pulled mother and son through; I cannot believe that my mother—for I was that son—would have been more effectively cared for, attended with greater dedication, in even that most modern facility where my own son was born.

And just a few months later, Dr. Le Forestier fell into Nazi hands and was murdered by the henchmen of Klaus Barbie, the SS thug who was later to become a United States intelligence operative and who is now at last, so late, being brought to justice.

There were so many others, so very many. I cannot name them all, but there is one more I cannot not name. It turns out that you cannot know who will be caught up in a conspiracy of goodness once it is launched. And it appears that a German officer, Major Julius Schmähling of the *Wehrmacht*, knew *exactly* what was going on in Le Chambon—and ordered those convalescing German soldiers, whose curiosity was sometimes aroused, to invest in recovering their own strength, to mind their own business.

So my son Davíd, who will know that his great-grandmother Feigl Suchowolski and his granduncle Memel Suchowolski and his grandaunt and granduncle Helaina and David Pisar, and his then-nine-year-old cousin Frieda Pisar, that all these and more were incinerated, will know as well the names Trocmé, and Le Forestier, and Héritier, and Brottes, the name Le Chambon, will know that even in those days and places the Jews had friends.

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Top: Wards of the children's home la Guespy, many of them Jewish, Winter, 1944.
Center: Daniel Trocmé.
Bottom: Roger Le Forestier (on right).

And I mean to tell him also, lest he miss the point, that there were people as good and as righteous in every single country of occupied Europe. Perhaps none saved Jews on the scale of Le Chambon, perhaps nowhere else did such a remarkable consensus emerge. But yes, even in Bialystok, even in Lithuania, even in the Ukraine, there were people who helped, individuals who risked and sometimes lost their lives, often defying not only the Nazis but their own neighbors, people whose actions—because so solitary—are in some respects even more remarkable than those of the Chambonnais. Davíd is entitled to know such things.

As, of course, are we all. We remember the Danes and their heroism, and we remember Raoul Wallenberg and now Oskar Schindler, and we, who have taught that "the righteous Gentiles of all nations will have a share in the world to come" have made in Yad Vashem a place of honor for these *chassidei umot ha'olam*, these righteous Gentiles. (Among the few thousand there honored—so far—are the Chambonnais André Trocmé, young Daniel Trocmé and the assistant pastor Édouard Theis and his Ohio-born wife Mildred.)

But there is more, much more, that we do not yet know. We know very little about the extent of such conduct, and we know very, very little about who the good people were and less still about why they acted as they did. By and large, we have perceived them as misplaced footnotes to a macabre text. Especially to the survivors, the issue of righteous behavior has been difficult, even painful. Knowing the extent of the loss, hence the depth of the mourning, how find time or room for thanksgiving? How, how find in the grisly story a cause for celebration?

I am a filmmaker from southern California, in the United States, de-

scendant of the murdered, heir to endless gloom and memory most bitter. I was born in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in France, and I have come to believe that the story of the righteous Gentiles is not merely interesting, that because of the extent of the atrocity and its continuing psychological costs it is an indispensable story. I cannot expect others to discover and tell that story, for the existence of the righteous Gentiles is a constant rebuke to those others; it is a reminder of their complicity, a rebuttal of the alibi that it was not possible to care, to do anything.

But I cannot accept that we, the Jews, remain so ignorant of and indifferent to the righteous. That we do seems to me to say more about our still traumatized state of mind than it does about them and their significance.

The knowledge is indispensable not just because this cynical world desperately needs to be reminded that moral behavior is possible even under the most unlikely circumstances, that it is both gratifying and appreciated. In a world that has known such darkness, in which a new darkness threatens, can we afford not to study and to celebrate goodness?

But there is more. By neglecting the righteous of the Holocaust, by not being more genuinely and actively interested in searching them out and understanding them, by not integrating them more fully and more prominently into our accounts and memorializations of the Holocaust, we fail not just the urgent universal agenda, but even our own pragmatic interests. For there is here, plainly, the opportunity to present especially dramatic and inspiring positive role models to the Gentile—especially the Christian—world. Might such models not serve as a prod to current behavior? And might our own increased understanding of the sources of righteousness not be useful to us, today, as we seek dependable allies?

And there is more. These heroes, these mostly quite ordinary people whose heroism was not a play for the spotlight, are inspiring and authentic and significant only because they contrast so dramatically with the apathy and complicity of the rest of the world. They became heroes because there were villains; they are remembered because there was a Holocaust. We who care that the memory of the Holocaust be sustained, as a tribute to the slaughtered, as a warning to the generations, must know that people are more likely to approach its horror, to confront the fact that we live in a world that permitted an uncountable number of children to be burned because they were Jews, in a world that has known utter moral bankruptcy, if there is, at the edges of that world, the solace of the righteous, the knowledge that there were those who stood aside from that world and rejected it.

"*There were so few of them.*" As if moral or spiritual significance is a matter of numbers. As if we even knew the numbers in this largely uncharted chapter of our past. As if we didn't believe, we Jews especially, that even tiny minorities may own important, perhaps even divine, truths.

The late pastor of Le Chambon lived his life, his eloquent pacifist's life, as a demonstration of Christian faith. Yet in his unpublished memoirs, he confided that his faith was, ultimately, in the possibility of good on earth, "without which," he added, "the theoretical existence of God doesn't interest me."

And I, the father of Davíd, who want to believe in that possibility, too, who want to extend it and pass both the belief and the evidence for it on to my child and to his, am bound to seek out and to treasure and to learn from the bits and pieces I can find even in the moral rubble of these times—especially in the moral rubble of these times.

That is why, as I tell Davíd of these things, as he learns that there is in all of us a capacity for evil and an even greater and more insidious capacity for apathy, I want him to learn that the stories of the righteous are not footnotes to the past but cornerstones to the future. I owe my life to the good people of Le Chambon. I owe even more than that to my son. ✱

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Top: Pierre Sauvage, his son Davíd and his wife Barbara Rubin visit Magda Trocmé
Bottom: Magda Trocmé and Davíd Sauvage

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'Weapons of the Spirit': A Journey Home

By Pierre Sauvage

(1) Filmmaker Pierre Sauvage in his father's arms in 1944; (2) Jewish and Christian youth at play in Nazi-occupied Le Chambon, France (1944); (3) Director Pierre Sauvage sitting before the ruins of his boyhood home in Le Chambon, France

Five years after I began working on it, my film "Weapons of the Spirit" is premiering tomorrow night at the American Film Institute's Fest-L.A. And I ask myself: Why did it take so long? Was it really worth it?

The film is the story of a village in France that took in and sheltered Jews during the Holocaust: Le Chambon-sur-Lignon.

I am a Jew who was born in Nazi-occupied Europe. That means that around the time of my birth, much of my family was humiliated, tortured and murdered in the Nazi death camps. While the world stood by.

Yet I was born and protected on that plateau in the mountains of south-central France. There, the day after France fell to the Nazis, the pacifist pastors of Le Chambon proclaimed the need to resist violence "through the weapons of the spirit."

There, at the risk of their lives, the peasants and villagers of the area defied the Nazis and the collaborationist Vichy regime, turning their tiny community into occupied Europe's most determined haven of refuge for the Jews. There, in the course of four long years, some 5,000 Jews were saved — by some 5,000 Christians!

And after five years of a (not atypical) creative and financial high-wire act, the result is a movie which, in comparison with "real" movies, faces an uphill struggle to reach a wide audience: it is a true story, after all, told by the people who lived it.

So was it worth it?

It would have been worth it even if the negative had gone up in flames and the film remained only in my head. For the experience of making this film, of learning from these "doers of good," has given my life renewed direction and strength. Such are the occasional benefits of making a documentary film.

I don't know how much my adventure of making "Weapons of the Spirit" has in common with that of other documentary filmmakers. As with all such films there were problems galore. But the important ones all turned out to be the flip side of an opportunity. At least the more I worked on the film, the more I came to perceive things that way.

For instance, getting the film off the ground was the easiest part. I had barely conceived of doing it when someone at one of the French television networks, a committed Jew, decided that this was indeed a film that should be made.

My crew and I arrived in Le Chambon just in time. The good die *old*, but several key participants in the film passed away not long after it was shot, and every year since has brought new losses that I experience almost like a death in the family. Soon, there will be nobody in Le Chambon left to thank.

I symbolically began by filming some footage of me in the ruins of the farmhouse where I was welcomed into the world. All I was able to use later on was a long shot; my expressions in the close-ups seemed to reflect my controlled panic at the challenge that lay ahead.

At the time of World War II, most of the peasants and villagers of the area of Le Chambon were devoutly Christian descendants of Huguenots — French Protestants who had themselves known persecution and slaughter at the hands of the kings of France and their own countrymen.

Like peasants elsewhere, the older inhabitants of this windswept, wintry mountain enclave tend to be wary, taciturn and private. I knew that, like rescuers elsewhere, they would not readily expound on their deeds or their motivations.

It was thus with some apprehension that I walked up the hill for the first interview. It was to be with Henri and Emma Héritier, a peasant couple in their 80s whom I planned to film standing outside the farmhouse they had turned into a place of sanctuary.

It seemed natural to begin with the Héritiers. They remembered my parents well. Their daughter Eva had helped take care of me; several of the early drafts of the film opened with a photograph of me as an infant in Eva's arms. I knew the Héritiers would do their best to humor me.

Monsieur Héritier stares resolutely at the ground when I get to the expected question: "Why did you shelter Jews?" He's not going to tell me that he thinks the question meaningless, almost stupid. He merely shrugs his shoulders and says, "When people came, if we could be of help . . ."

When I press on, noting the risks they had taken, Madame Héritier looks up just long enough to say simply that one gets used to the risk. And then she looks down again, hoping I will not insist on answers she believes she does not have.

As it happens, the Héritiers were among those taking the greatest risks, for they knew full well that among the Jews they had taken in was a teenager who had become the village forger, spending his nights making false identity papers for all who needed them.

Towards the end of the war, German soldiers were stationed smack in the middle of the village. Monsieur Héritier is a beekeeper. His response to the increased threat: he hid the forger's paraphernalia in his beehives.

From that interview on, everything that could go right with the shoot did (or at least I only remember the good parts). In Le Chambon and later in Paris, I got all the interview material I needed, from Christians and Jews. If anything, it was an embarrassment of riches.

I began accumulating masses of data, documents and photographs. The contents of that file cabinet will one day be part of the historical museum being planned for Le Chambon.

The wartime snapshots were

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especially important, given that the documentary filmmaker is always at the mercy of his visual material. With no one refusing to lend me their precious memorabilia, I rounded up hundreds upon hundreds of these photographs, which may well constitute the largest photographic record that will ever be assembled of Jews in any one place during the Nazi occupation of Europe.

I was also determined to place the story of Le Chambon bluntly in its historical French context. Working with a historian, I gained access to dusty, incriminating documents in France's National Archives and selected about two hours of evocative newsreel footage from which I would cull later on.

I love France, and in many respects I am and remain very French. But the shameful record of France's vigorously anti-Semitic policies during World War II, culminating in popular Marshal Petain's compliance with the deportation of Jews "to the East," needed to be unequivocally spelled out. No big deal for Americans, no doubt. But still such a raw nerve in France that no documentary f'mmaker had yet addressed the subject.

The French financial participation turned out to be limited to the shoot, and not long after my return to Los Angeles, I set up a non-profit foundation, Friends of Le Chambon, in order to complete the film and promote continued interdisciplinary exploration of the issues the film raises.

I began lecturing about the necessary lessons of hope still buried beneath the Holocaust's unavoidable lessons of despair. I wrote articles. I conducted a lecture series at UCLA Extension. In effect, I was trying out my material and my approach.

Ostensibly, I was straying far from filmmaking, but I realize now that during that time I was groping, consciously and unconsciously, towards a necessary understanding of what it is the film would be about.

And at last, after several false starts, the editing itself took off for good. My editor, Matthew Harrison, was then a young filmmaker and assistant editor from Oregon who'd probably never before given a second's thought to the Holocaust. He also didn't speak a word of French, the language of much of the footage he'd be working on. But he is smart and creative, and his lack of connection to the material was a perfect match for my overcommitment. Later, post-production supervisor Dominique Oren joined our tiny team.

How I longed for video as we spent hours hunting down footage and putt-putting along in antiquated non-computer-assisted film editing; documentarians of the very near future will smile tenderly at all we still put ourselves through today.

I now faced many challenges. I wanted the film to be dramatically effective yet historically impeccable. I knew nothing about Christianity and very little about religion. Yet I was determined to respect and convey the particular slant on life these activist Christians had exemplified in their deeds.

A complicating factor, with significant psychological ramifications, was my parents' firm wish to keep their own life histories private. Just how much of a right did I have to detail publicly the relevant circumstances of my own birth? No answer seemed obvious, but I needed to honor their feelings to the extent that I could.

Most important of all, I had to convey the heroism of my protagonists without betraying the simplicity and seeming casualness that was inherent in that very heroism. Whatever the temptations, I knew I mustn't make these people seem "larger than life." The point, after all, was precisely the opposite; if somebody hadn't already used the title, I might well have called the film "Ordinary People."

In Paris, before the shoot, I'd called Marcel Ophuls, the master documentarian of "The Sorrow and the Pity," to seek some advice. He asked whether I had a script. I said no, with some embarrassment. "Good," he said. "If you had, I wouldn't have known how to talk to you."

Indeed, I can't imagine how I could possibly have mapped out "Weapons of the Spirit" in advance. I've found that before a shoot, you can never even predict for sure who your strongest characters are going to be, let alone in what specific directions the material is going to lead you.

In any event, the effect of the footage, far more than in a dramatic film, derives from the juxtapositions you come up with in the editing room. In fact, the less you remember about your original intentions the better, and it's often most productive to use an editor who has as few preconceived ideas about the material as possible.

I once boasted to my six-year-old son David that a documentary film was like a 5,000-piece jigsaw puzzle, with the difference that few pieces seem at first to belong inevitably next to any other — and the additional twist that the pieces actually change in appearance each time they're shifted about.

My computer was an invaluable tool in this process, allowing us to have a constantly updated paper record of the ever-changing film. Mistakes and ideas would leap up at me as I shifted blocks of text on the monitor. I can no longer imagine filmmaking without a computer any more than I can imagine life without a telephone answering machine.

As the film started coming together, my biggest concern was its possible length. Just ⟵ when I was beginning to rationalize that perhaps the film was meant to be one of those massive frescoes with no empathy for the spectator's physical comfort, I stumbled on an admonition the philosopher Jacques Maritain had jotted in a youthful journal, obviously with my situation in mind: "The greater the artist, the more he eliminates."

Henri and Emma Héritier took Jewish children into their home throughout the Nazi occupation of France in World War II

I repeated the line to myself whenever I hesitated about whether to cut something or to keep it in. Those cuts can be very painful. One ends up eliminating material that is just as good — or better — than what is kept but that simply does not quite fit. Whole people, too, had to be eliminated, with Matt sometimes touchingly trying his best to save figures to whom he had also grown attached.

French writer Paul Valéry once said that a poem is never finished, only abandoned. The time soon came to set a firm deadline for the "abandonment" of the film, no matter what improvements might still be possible. By then, I had decided that I would arbitrarily keep the film at 90 minutes. I failed. The film runs 91 minutes.

Before "locking" the picture, I returned to Le Chambon once again, with a copy of the work print of the film. There was to be a gathering of Jews who'd been in the area during the war, and I'd agreed to screen the film for them and for our Chambonnais friends.

Too many of the latter had already died. Despite the usually apt conventional wisdom about never screening a work print, I welcomed the excuse to share the film with its aging protagonists and was also eager to receive any timely feedback that might come my way. Many of the people in the film, Jews and Christians, attended the screening.

This sort of event is a privilege reserved for documentary filmmakers. No big-ticket mainstream director gets to screen his film with the actual characters present and reacting.

I'd returned too late to see Madame Héritier again. Her death, during the editing, had found its way into the very fabric of the film itself. But the door to the Héritier home was open, as usual, when I came by shortly after my arrival. Monsieur Héritier was sitting at his kitchen table, staring into space.

His health was not too good, he said, reminding me that he was 87 and expressing some concern about the emotional impact of seeing the film. I imagined that he was wondering what it would be like to see Emma again, his late companion of 64 years of life together.

But his daughter Eva did bring him to the screening, and afterwards I spotted him in the lobby of the tiny new movie theater in Le Chambon, standing against the wall surrounded by several generations of his family. He was smiling, and I felt like a king as I was introduced to the family members I didn't know, some of whom remembered the baby that used to wake up the neighborhood.

He was back at the kitchen table again when I came to say goodbye. "The film was better than I'd expected," he volunteered, rather seriously.

When I had to leave, he told me to wait a minute, then walked over to the cupboard. The beehives were a thing of the past, as he could no longer climb the hill to them. But he still had a few jars of his honey left, stamped with his name. He got one and handed it to me. "Here, take this," he said. "That way you'll think of me once in a while."

Was it all worth it?

There's no reward in the world that will ever rival that jar of honey. ★

"Weapons of the Spirit" will be screened for the public on March 18 at 7:30 p.m. at the Los Feliz Theater.

Pierre Sauvage is an Emmy-winning documentary maker and the president of the Friends of Le Chambon Foundation.

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SHADOWS OF THE HOLOCAUST:
REFLECTIONS BY THE AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN POSTWAR GENERATION

(Goethe Institute/Martyrs Memorial)

Sunday, November 6, 1988, 10:30 am

PAIN, GUILT AND RAGE: HAVE WE MOVED BEYOND?

Moderator: Pierre Sauvage
Panelists: Helen Epstein
Peter Sichrovsky
Doerte von Westernhagen
Henryk Broder
Menachem Z. Rosensaft

TRANSCRIPT OF INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY PIERRE SAUVAGE

When I was called a while back and asked whether I would be interested in moderating this panel, my first reaction was to say--or at least, to think--"Boy, is this up my alley!"

Pain, guilt, rage... To be quite candid about it, these are emotions that for various reasons I've felt closer to these last months than ever before. And this was true even before I experienced a very important loss just a week ago, as I will share with you shortly.

I'm not sure how much my state of mind has had to do with the Holocaust, and its lingering effects on me--particularly as I now seem to work in the field of the Holocaust--and how much is simply my own personal mishegass. (Which for those of you who need the translation is a friendly Yiddish word for mild insanity.)

In any event, I won't embarrass you any further by saying more than you want to hear about that--especially so early on--but I do feel the need to tell you that a subject like this morning's hits a nerve in me.

And thus my second reaction was to tell Barbara Rottman, who was issuing the invitation to moderate this panel, that this is not an instance where I could play disinterested facilitator and referee.

Barbara said that was fine--perhaps not thinking it over as much as she might have--and now I apologize in advance that I am not likely to "moderate" this panel so much as I am to provoke it--and you.

But then isn't that our role this morning: to be as personal as possible. To share our experiences. To

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lead off these postwar-generation reflections with some fundamental building blocks of feelings and emotions. To connect with whatever pain, guilt, and rage we may have, leaving to the historians this afternoon the responsibility for providing a judicious context for our experience, and to the creative artists tomorrow evening the task of assessing how and whether that experience can or should be conveyed through art.

But as I indicated, there is something else of a personal nature that I must share with you. Because I need to. And because I think it is, in a symbolic way, highly relevant to the situation of our post-Holocaust generation.

Just last Sunday evening, I got that phone call that people always remember. It was my mother, with the news that my father had just died.

When I was asked--when he was alive--whether we had a close relationship, I would answer no. We would talk on the phone every Sunday morning at about this time--my parents live (lived?) in New York--and over the years we had a lot to argue about.

What most surprises me now is the extent to which my feelings about him are changing because of his death, and how much I miss him. I also can't help thinking of all that I withheld from him in retaliation for all that he had withheld from me.

If you'll indulge me a little more, I want to tell you that it happens that my father had a remarkable career as a journalist and author. And one of the main forms that my mourning took this week was writing an obituary on him--two actually, one for France, where he was well known, and one for the U.S.--my "spin," if you will, on his life, but actually my attempt to convey that life precisely as <u>he</u> would have wanted it conveyed.

Friday, I received phone calls from the New York Times and U.P.I. and they acted as if I was driving them nuts because I wouldn't give them my father's place of birth.

I couldn't explain to them that it was just one of those families... And that my father would have wanted what was to them a gaping hole in his obit. I wondered if they'd write: "Son Pierre Sauvage declined to give his father's place of birth."

Actually, the U.P.I. was sneakier than that. They called a publication that my father had worked for and they got the "cover story" I had been unwilling to repeat. And that's what ran in today's L.A. Times.

Similarly, his death had confronted me with a dilemma, although actually there was never any doubt in my mind that there too I would respect his wishes, although these had more serious consequences for me and for my family.

Those last wishes were that there be no funeral, no services, that he be cremated, that his ashes be scattered over the ocean.

This meant that the laws of Judaism would be violated and, frankly even more importantly for me, that his grandchildren--and his children--would be deprived of a physical place that remained his, for ever and ever.

That is how far I was willing to go to respect his wishes. That far, but not much more.

You see, some of you know me as a child of Holocaust survivors, as a child survivor of the Holocaust, and thus as a Jew.

But that is <u>not</u> the way I was raised.

I am, perhaps, becoming a Jew, with the essential help of my wife

and my eight year-old son, and what I increasingly believe to be common sense--that one derives strength from being one's self, and that one's self is rooted, among other things, in one's heritage and one's history. Exactly the opposite of what my father believed.

And this evolution of mine did not have his blessing, was even probably experienced as a repudiation and a betrayal.

Oh, I wasn't raised as a Christian. I was raised as a "nothing."

I have never before said this publicly, and I agonized until late in the night as to whether I was going to say it this morning. And ultimately the thing that clinched it was a line I remembered from Elie Wiesel's "The Fifth Son," which is about the experience of a child of survivors, and in which it is said at one point: "The duty of the Jewish father is towards the living."

Well, I want to live an open life, with no secrets. And I want to pass that approach onto my children.

And thus I will even tell you that at the age of 18, just as I was getting ready to go off to Paris to live and study--to live in fact with my cousin, who was a survivor of Auschwitz--my parents called me into the living room, sat me down, and told me that I was Jewish. Or perhaps that they were Jewish. Or perhaps that they were born Jewish. I just don't remember.

My mother, a Polish Jew, had gone along with my Father, a French Jew--at least roughly speaking a French Jew. Perhaps all those years, they had simply remained in hiding.

In any event, the rest of the family went along too. Most of it, those who hadn't been killed off, were kept at arm's length, or I didn't know about their existence at all.

The conspiracy worked. I never caught on. I think I've learned something about the power of taboos.

My father never became comfortable with the new me, the almost flamboyantly self-proclaimed Jew, the public speaker about the Holocaust, and I always felt a little embarrassed talking about these things in his presence.

And thus, for instance, my film "Weapons of the Spirit," about that unique community of Christians where my parents were sheltered and where I was born, was not--contrary, I'm sure, to what most viewers assume--the work of a dutiful child. It was the work of a rebellious child.

If I'd respected my father's wishes, I wouldn't be a Jew, I wouldn't be the father of two Jews, and I certainly wouldn't be here today.

So while I realize that there are probably few of you who are able to relate in any direct way to what I have just felt the need to say about my relationship with my father--and here I take the liberty of addressing myself particularly to fellow children of survivors--I submit that we cannot take as a given, because of our love for our parents, because of our awareness of what they went through (and my parents were spared more than most), that we can be content merely to be dutiful children.

We must not deny the pain, and guilt and rage that may be buried in many of us, whether we still have the good fortune to have our parents or whether we do not.

And to the survivors among you, our parents, may I say, Please, stick around as long as you can. We need you. Most of all, we need your blessing to move on, to become ourselves.

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WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT

CLASSROOM VERSION • VIEWER'S GUIDE

Henri and Emma Héritier, here posing in 1944 outside their farm in the village of Le Chambon, France, were among the rescuers of the area who sheltered 5,000 Jews during the Nazi occupation. PHOTO: FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON

For further information about friends of Le Chambon, or to reach Pierre Sauvage, please write to:

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THE VIDEO

"A Conspiracy of Goodness"

Weapons of the Spirit – Classroom Version, is the story of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, a small mountain village in south-central France, and how its citizens responded to the Nazi terror against the Jews.

During the dreadful years of the German occupation of France (1940-1944), while French collaborators in other parts of the country delivered 75,000 Jews, including 10,000 children, into the hands of the Gestapo, the 5,000 residents of the area of Le Chambon, quietly and matter-of-factly, took in and saved as many Jews as their entire population—5,000 who came to them for shelter and refuge.

The narrator of the video, Pierre Sauvage, who is also its producer, writer, and director, was born in Le Chambon in 1944 to Jewish parents sheltered by farmers in the area. "On March 25, 1944, a Jewish baby had the good fortune to see the light of day in a place on earth uniquely committed to his survival."

Through interviews with the rescuers and the Jews whom they saved, newsreel footage, photographs, and historical accounts, Sauvage has given us a video that is an awesome testimony to the ability of goodness and righteousness to triumph over evil and hatred.

"Among the 5,000 Jews saved in the area of Le Chambon during the Nazi occupation were filmmaker Pierre Sauvage, here with his father shortly after his birth in 1944. PHOTO: FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON

THIS VIEWER'S GUIDE

"Why, When The World Cared So Little, Did A Few People Care So Much?"

The purpose of this guide is to help students understand, analyze, and apply what the video suggests: that one group of people with a community of purpose can unite to resist and overcome evil.

The guide begins with a general overview of the Holocaust. A short summary of historical background is presented, after which students are asked to recall the information offered in the video about the events of the Holocaust in general, as well as in France specifically. In addition, a number of related activities offer a variety of ways in which students can broaden their knowledge and understanding of the nature of the genocide against the Jews engaged in by the Nazis during World War II.

The guide then focuses on the village of Le Chambon, beginning with profiles of people who participated in the events of the time, either as rescuers of Jews or as Jews who were rescued.

We then proceed to a consideration of the "weapons of the spirit" used by the citizens of Le Chambon to resist Nazi tyranny. Students are asked to determine how these "weapons" contributed to the ultimate triumph of good over evil.

The guide concludes with the students applying the knowledge and understanding they have gained to situations in their own lives in which they, their friends, family, and/or community may be faced with significant moral decisions.

Village of Le Chambon. PHOTO: FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON

The quotations that precede each section of the guide are questions asked or statements made in the video.

A listing of supplemental print and audiovisual resources available from the Anti-Defamation League's Braun Center for Holocaust Studies is appended.

Section 1:

THE HOLOCAUST

"A Spiritual Plague Was Sweeping Throughout The Western World"

The Holocaust was the planned, systematic attempt by the Nazis and their supporters to annihilate the Jewish people, and to eradicate every vestige of Jewish life and culture from the European continent, and ultimately from the world. This the Nazis called "The Final Solution of the Jewish Question."

During World War II, millions of people throughout Europe were swept into the Nazi net of death. However, the Nazi assault against the Jews was unique in that it involved the mobilization of all the resources of the state and the most advanced science and technology of the time toward a single goal, the total annihilation of a group of people. Throughout occupied Europe, Jews were rounded up, isolated from the rest of the population, stripped of their possessions, brutally concentrated into makeshift ghettos, and ultimately deported to slave labor and death camps. No Jew was exempt, regardless of age or status. All shared the same fate.

YOUNG VICTIMS! An artist's recollection of Jewish children being gathered by the French police at the Drancy internment camp outside Paris during the Nazi occupation. With the complicity of the anti-Semitic regime of popular World War I hero Marshal Petain, the Final Solution was to claim 75,000 lives in France, the victims' ages ranging from a few months to 95 years old. DRAWING BY GEORGE HORAN (FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON)

Nazi single-minded efficiency, combined with the collaboration of sympathizers and the widespread apathy of bystanders in the countries they conquered, was abetted by the silence and indifference of the

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Allies fighting the Germans. The final result was the murder of 6 million Jews—two-thirds of the Jewish population of Europe.

But even in a time as brutal and hopeless as this, there were people who at great risk to themselves tried to save Jewish lives. Yad Vashem, the memorial museum in Jerusalem, records the names of over 8,000 men and women who saved Jewish friends, neighbors, and strangers. In most cases these rescuers worked alone or in small groups, fearful of discovery by neighbors and acquaintances who might not hesitate to report them to the Gestapo. Yet in Le Chambon, an entire village, under the shadow of the German occupiers, managed to shelter thousands of Jews fleeing from the Nazi terror.

FRANCE 1940-1944. FRANCE DURING WORLD WAR II. After the fall of France and the establishment of the collaborationist Vichy regime, over a quarter of the country's 300,000 to 350,000 Jews were forced into squalid, French-run internment camps. Most of these internees (many of them foreign-born refugees) were later deported to "the East," primarily Auschwitz, where they were murdered. MAP BY PIERRE SAUVAGE (FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What information does the video give us about the Holocaust in general?

2. Describe the Holocaust in France.
   a. What did the video tell us about the implementation of the "Final Solution" in France?
   b. What was the effect of the Nazi occupation on the Jews of Paris and occupied northern France, and how did it compare to how the Jews were treated in Vichy France, the so-called "Free Zone"?
   c. What happened to Jews who were deported from southern to northern France?
   d. What happened to Jews when the Germans took control in southern France?

3. Why were Jews deported from France to Eastern Europe? What happened to them there?

4. What does the video tell us about the attitudes toward Jews in other countries of Europe and in the United States?

5. Compare the responsibility of the French with that of the Nazis in the murder of 75,000 Jews of France.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. Ask the student to outline a chronology of the key events of World War II in France.

2. Divide the class into learning groups. Ask each group to pick a different country in Europe occupied by the Nazis during World War II, and to research the effect this occupation had on that country, and on the Jewish citizens of that country. Final reports can include pictures, drawings, literary works, graphs and charts as well as factual information.

3. The video's narration states: "The Holocaust occurred in the heart of Christian Europe, and would not have been possible without the apathy or complicity of most Christians, and without the virulent tradition of anti-Semitism that had long infected the very soul of Christianity."
   a. Analyze and respond to these strong words.
   b. Define "anti-Semitism." A suggested definition: Any activity that tends to force or hold Jews in an inferior

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position and limit their economic, political, and social rights.

c Ask each learning group to choose a different period of time in the history of Europe, and try to determine what role anti-Semitism played during that period. The students' research could include such events as the destruction of the communities of the Rhineland during the Crusades; the expulsions of Jews from western European countries; the destruction of Jewish communities accused of "ritual murder," "host desecration" and causing the Black Plague; the Spanish Inquisition; the placement of Jews in ghettos in Italy and Germany; the pogroms in Russia; the Dreyfus Affair in France.

Section 2:

LE CHAMBON: THE RESCUERS AND THE RESCUED

"A Normal Thing To Do"

In the area of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, France, during the Nazi occupation, 5,000 Jews were taken in and sheltered by 5,000 Christians.

Weapons of the Spirit, in this 38-minute video classroom version, as well as in a 90-minute film and video feature-length version, tells the story of this unique "conspiracy of goodness."

WITNESSES IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE: CLASSROOM VERSION

1 Pierre Sauvage, the filmmaker and narrator: "A Jewish baby had the good fortune to see the light of day in a place on earth uniquely committed to his survival."

2 Henri and Emma Héritier, the peasant couple who sheltered the village forger and other Jews and helped the filmmaker's family: Mr. Héritier: "When people came, if we could be of help . . ."

3 Georgette Barraud, who ran a boarding home that took in many Jews: "It happened so naturally, we can't understand the fuss."

4 Charles Gibert, the old villager who sings the local Huguenot hymn.

5 Lesley Maber, the Englishwoman who moved to Le Chambon before the war: "People who seem very ordinary can do great things if they're given the opportunity."

6 Madeleine Dreyfus, the French Jewish relief worker who always succeeded in placing Jewish children in the farmhouses of the area.

7 Marguerite Roussel, the Catholic woman who, like the other members of the area's Catholic minority, joined actively in the rescue effort: "We never analyzed what we were doing. It happened by itself."

8 Magda Trocmé, the widow of pastor André Trocmé, pastor of Le Chambon during during the war: "If we'd had an organization, we would have failed."

THIS TRAIN'S DESTINATION HAD BEEN HOPE. One of the old steam-engine trains that brought several thousand Jews, including Pierre Sauvage's own parents, to the determined wartime sanctuary of Le Chambon, France. PHOTO: FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON.

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9 Marie Brottes, the Christian fundamentalist for whom the Jews were "The People of God . . . And the Jew, truly, had fallen among thieves."

10 Adolphe and Aline Caritey, whose home was the headquarters of the armed resistance in Le Chambon.

11 Oskar Rosowsky, the Jewish teenager who forged false I.D.'s for all who needed them.

12 Marguerite Kohn, the Orthodox Jew who remembers that her neighbors respected her faith.

13 Pastor Edouard Theis, the assistant pastor of Le Chambon during the war: "The Christian faith merely had to be applied."

14 Roger Darcissac, director of the public school who told authorities there were no Jewish students there: "It was the human thing to do."

Section 3:

LE CHAMBON: THE WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT

"The Duty of Christians Is To Resist The Violence That Will Be Brought To Bear On Their Consciences Through The Weapons Of The Spirit."

What were some of these "Weapons of the Spirit" in Le Chambon?

WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT

A. Deeply held religious principles that guide moral behavior.

B. Clear remembrance of a past history of persecution (historical memory).

C. A sense of individual responsibility.

D. The exercise of courage, fortitude, and resourcefulness.

Let us determine how each of these "weapons" contributed to thwarting the Nazis and saving Jewish lives.

A. Deeply Held Religious Principles That Guide Moral Behavior

"You Shall Love God and Your Neighbor As Yourself. That's The Summary of Christian Faith."

HELPING THE PEOPLE OF GOD. Mme. Marie Brottes, one of the area's numerous "fundamentalist" Christians, who conducted their own services and did not recognize the authority of the clergy. The Brottes family took in a succession of foreign Jews, including a Viennese doctor and his wife and child. She insists that for her and for many other similarly devout Christians, the Jews were the people of God, whom it was a special privilege to help.
PHOTO: PIERRE SAUVAGE (FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. While the people of Le Chambon were primarily Protestant, those who were Christian Fundamentalists as well as the Catholic minority also appeared to act on the same deeply held religious principles. What were these principles?
2. How did these principles shape their moral behavior?
3. What role did Pastor André Trocmé play in guiding the people of Le Chambon to apply religious principles?

RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. Watch the video *The Courage to Care*. (See appended list of resources). In this video we meet several people who rescued Jews during the Holocaust. Divide the class into learning groups. Ask each group to choose one of the individuals in the film and discuss whether this individual was acting primarily out of religious principles or not. If so, what were they? If not, what other grounds did the rescuer use to come to his or her

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moral decisions? The students might find useful Eva Fogelman's work on the "Psychological Origins of Rescue." (See appended list of resources.)

2. Danish rescuers were able to save 95% of the Jews of Denmark. View the video *Act of Faith*. (See appended list of resources) Did religious principles play a role there? What other considerations or moral guidelines may have influenced the Danish rescuers?
3. View the video *Joseph Schultz*, which is based on a number of incidents in World War II in which German soldiers, ordered to execute civilians, refused to do so and were executed with them. What questions about personal moral choice versus obedience to authority are raised in this video? How would citizens of Le Chambon have behaved in similar circumstances?

B. Clear Remembrance of a Past History of Persecution (Historical Memory)

"And In Every Challenge There Would Be An Echo Of Their Forefathers' Struggle and Faith."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who were the Huguenots? What does the video tell us of their history?
2. Why was this history of importance to the people of Le Chambon?
3. How did the citizens of Le Chambon apply the lessons of their forefathers to the events they faced during World War II?
4. Define "empathy." How does it apply in this case?
5. Do you think people with a strong sense of identity are more likely or less likely to respect and care about others?

RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. Divide the class into four learning groups. Three of the groups will research the experience of the Huguenots as a persecuted minority, concentrating respectively on the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. The fourth group will research the role Huguenots played in the settlement and life of America.

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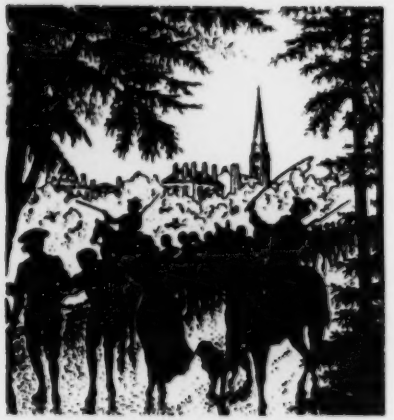
Marie Durand, a famous heroine of Huguenot history, writing "RESIST" on the side of the tower in which she was imprisoned. HUGUENOT DRAWING: "RESIST" SAMUEL BASTIDE, "LA TOUR DE CONSTANCE" (FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON)



Chained Huguenot Prisoners. HUGUENOT DRAWING: "CHAINED MEN" SAMUEL BASTIDE, "LES GALERIENS POUR LA FOI" (FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON)

2. Two other religious groups that were persecuted early in their history were the Quakers and the Mormons. Ask the students to try to determine if this history of persecution continues to have any influence on present-day Quakers and Mormons.
3. What do Jews mean by the expression "Never Again"? Do you believe that remembrance of past persecution can be effective in preventing genocide against Jews or against any other people from ever happening again?

C. A Sense of Individual Responsibility

"The Conspiracy of Goodness Was Individualistic and Unspoken."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Magda Trocmé tells us, "Each person, each day did what seemed necessary. As challenges arose, each person acted on their own." What are some ways in which the villagers of Le Chambon "acted on their own"?
2. The villagers in the video repeatedly stress the naturalness of what they did, with one of them going so far as to say that "It happened by itself." Why do you think they feel that way?

3. The pastor of Le Chambon was "determined to bear Christian witness" and proclaimed a need for nonviolent moral resistance of the Nazis even before the village was faced with Jewish refugees. The villagers, on the other hand, appear "only" to have responded to the need as it presented itself to them. How would you compare these two attitudes? Does morality require that one actively look for good deeds to perform or simply that one respond morally to situations as they present themselves?
4. Magda Trocmé ends her statement as to the individual responsibility of the villagers of Le Chambon with the comment: "It was a general consensus." What are the advantages of acting as part of a collective rather than an individual effort? Are there any disadvantages?

THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE RIGHT PLACE. The late pastor André Trocmé, his wife Magda Trocmé, and their four children, a few years after their arrival in Le Chambon in 1934. A brilliant and inspiring spiritual leader, Trocmé was married to a woman of matchingly resourceful common sense. Passionately committed pacifists, they did much to create an oasis of peace in the hell of Nazi-occupied Europe. PHOTO: FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON

RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. View once again the video *The Courage to Care*. The learning groups should now analyze the sense of responsibility that motivates each of the rescuers featured in the video.
2. Ask the students to think of examples of individuals from childhood stories, literature, or history who exhibited a strong sense of individual responsibility. Some possible examples: the little Dutch boy who stuck his finger in a hole in the dike to stop the town from being flooded; Rosa Parks, a Black woman in Montgomery, Alabama, who singlehandedly challenged segregation by refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white passenger.

D. Courage, Fortitude and Resourcefulness

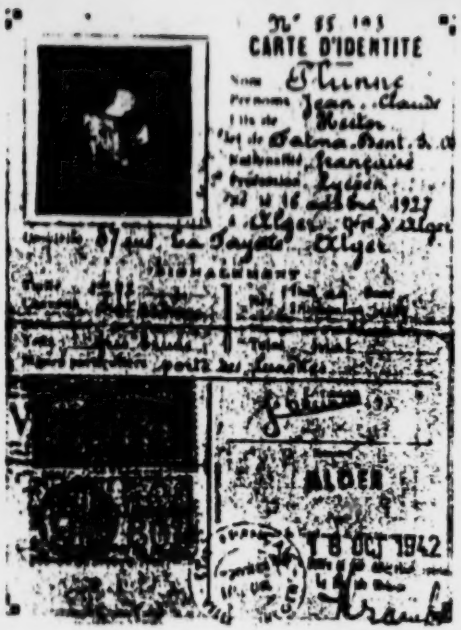
"People Who Seem Very Ordinary People Can Do Great Things If They're Given The Opportunity."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what sense were the people of Le Chambon "ordinary people"? What was the nature of the "opportunity" they were given?
2. Define "courage," "fortitude," and "resourcefulness."
3. To what extent did the acts of defiance engaged in by the people of Le Chambon, first against the Vichy government, and then against the Nazi occupiers, demonstrate courage, fortitude, and resourcefulness?
4. The villagers of Le Chambon were helping people very different from themselves, not only in terms of religion, but also of social class and often nationality. What allowed the people of Le Chambon to dismiss and disregard these differences to the point of risking their lives for these strangers?

RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. View the video *To Know Where They Are* (See appended list of resources). This is the story of two Polish women, each working without knowledge of the other, who defied the Nazis at great risk to themselves and their families by sheltering a local Jewish family. After a while, however, fearing exposure by a local Nazi



ONLY THE PHOTOGRAPH WAS AUTHENTIC. False identity papers were needed by many of the Jews who came to Le Chambon. This is the totally bogus identity card of the teenager who became the village's busy and proficient forger. In actuality a Russian Jew, Dr. Oskar Rosowsky is now a pediatrician on the outskirts of Paris. It is he who estmates that some five thousand Jews came through or lived in the area in the course of the war years. In Nazi-occupied Europe, it was a crime to help Jews, and there were rewards for betraying them. PHOTO: FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON

collaborator, they asked the Jews to leave their hiding places in their homes, and the Jewish family was subsequently captured and killed by the Nazis. What was different about the Polish women's situation? Why do you think they were unable to exhibit the same degree of courage, fortitude or resourcefulness demonstrated by the citizens of Le Chambon or the rescuers in the video *The Courage to Care?*

2. Research the stories of other rescuers of Jews who are not featured in any of the videos. Analyze their sense of individual responsibility and what kind of courage, fortitude and resourcefulness they displayed. For information about other rescuers, write to the Jewish Foundation for Christian Rescuers/ADL, 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017; or to Dr. Mordecai Paldiel, Director, Department for the Righteous, Yad Vashem P.O. Box 3477, Jerusalem 91043, Israel.

Section 4:

APPLYING THE KNOWLEDGE GAINED FROM *WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT*

"Above All, A Matter Of One's Own Conscience."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can you describe the key moral values that you hold? What do you think are the major sources for these values?

WORDS MATCHED BY CHRISTIAN DEEDS. In 1943, the pastor of Le Chambon, André Trocmé, the tall man in the last row, poses for a photograph with the children of one of the new children's homes, about half of whose wards were Jewish. PHOTO: FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON.

2. What are some ways in which you have applied your moral values to situations in your life that required moral decisions? Was it an easy or a difficult process? Why?

3. Much anti-social behavior is blamed on peer pressure. But peer pressure can also be a positive force as it was in Le Chambon. What kind of peer pressure is strongest in your school and among your friends?

4. Have events in your family's history, or in the history of your racial, ethnic or religious group, ever helped to strengthen your moral resolve? How did they do this?

5. The pastors of Le Chambon were pacifists, and the villagers used non-violent means of resistance. How important was this in the resistance of Le Chambon? What are some non-violent methods that one can use today to fight injustice?

6. How do you think you would have responded to the challenge faced by the people of Le Chambon?

7. Describe an instance of injustice with which you are familiar. Have you hesitated to speak up or act because the

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injustice was happening to "someone else" or "somewhere else?" How can individuals develop the sense of responsibility to resist injustice?

RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. Here in the United States, our democratic system has been blemished by instances of prejudice, scapegoating, and oppression that have occurred throughout our history. But resistance to such evil has also been manifest. Divide into learning groups to investigate the prejudice experienced by the following Americans, as well as the resistance to such prejudice that may have existed: Black Americans, Native Americans, Irish Americans, Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Jewish Americans.

2. Filmmaker Pierre Sauvage, who was himself born and sheltered in Le Chambon, is president of Friends of Le Chambon, a nonprofit foundation which he describes as being committed to "exploring and communicating necessary lessons of hope still buried beneath the Holocaust's unavoidable lessons of despair." Divide the class into three groups. Ask one group to identify some of the Holocaust's "lessons of despair." Ask the second group to identify some of the Holocaust's "lessons of hope." Ask the third group to listen to the first two presentations and then comment on who made the strongest case and why.

3. Filmmaker Pierre Sauvage indicates that he found the several quotations that follow to be particularly helpful to him in the making of *Weapons of the Spirit*. Ask the class to discuss these quotations; identify their relevance to the story of Le Chambon; and then apply the quotations to the students' own lives and those of their friends, family and community.

   a "There always comes a time in history when the person who dares to say that two plus two equal four is punished with death. . . . And the issue is not a matter of what reward or what punishment will be the outcome of that reasoning. The issue is simply whether or not two plus two equal four. . . . For those of our townspeople who were then risking their lives [to fight an outbreak of plague in their city], the decision they had to make was simply whether or not they were in the midst of a plague and whether or not it was necessary to struggle against it."

   Albert Camus, French writer,
   The Plague: A Novel

   b "To love one's self in the right way and to love one's neighbor are absolutely analogous concepts, are at bottom one and the same."

   Soren Kierkegaard,
   Danish religious thinker, *Works of Love*

   c "The opposite of love is not hate; it is indifference."

   Elie Wiesel,
   Jewish survivor of the Holocaust,
   author, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize

   d "We are taught by great actions that the universe is the property of every individual in it."

   Ralph Waldo Emerson,
   American writer, *Nature*

4. Ask each student to create a poster on how prejudice can be challenged and defeated. The posters can then be displayed in a special exhibit.

THE NORMAL THING TO DO. The late Mme. Georgette Barraud, who ran a pension that was known to be open to the hunted at any time of the day or night. "We didn't have that many Jews," she stressed. "It was the normal thing to do." Like elsewhere in occupied Europe, women often played a key role in this form of spiritual resistance to the Nazis. PHOTO PIERRE SAUVAGE (FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON)

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5. Ask the students to write essays on the nature of moral courage. The people of Le Chambon did not consider what they did remarkable—they were simply doing what they felt they had to do. Is this a universal characteristic of moral behavior? Why didn't more communities in Europe respond in the same way?

6. Organize a debate on the following proposition:
The presence of individual rescuers in all the countries of Europe, as well as the wonderful example of Le Chambon as a community that cared, makes the Holocaust seem less horrible than it was.
Those in opposition to the proposition might consider the notion that the fact of rescue makes the Holocaust seem even more horrible because it underscores that while rescue *was* possible, it was actually undertaken by so few.

7. Ask the students to examine some of the literature on moral courage. Some works that they might read: 1) *The Plague* by Albert Camus (begun while Camus was living near Le Chambon during World War II); 2) *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* by Martin Luther King, Jr.; 3) *On Civil Disobedience* by Henry David Thoreau; 4) *Antigone* by Sophocles, and 5) *Fear No Evil* by Natan Shcharansky.

8. Ask the students to write and produce a play based on the story of Le Chambon. Sources they can utilize, in addition to this video, are the full-length 90-minute version of *Weapons of the Spirit*; the book on Le Chambon by Philip Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood be Shed*; and the section on Le Chambon in the book *The Courage to Care*, Carol Rittner and Sondra Myers, eds. (See list of appended resources.)

RESOURCES

KEY TO READING LEVELS:

At the end of each annotation, suggested reading levels are indicated:
J—Grades 7-9
S—Grades 10-12
C—College students, teachers, and other adults.

EXHIBIT

Holocaust Poster Series. Created by ADL's Braun Center for Holocaust Studies. A unique educational tool. Twenty black-and-white posters (18" × 24"), viewer's guide, and suggestions for display. JSC.

PUBLICATONS

Fogelman, Eva. ***Psychological Origins of Rescue***. New York: ADL, 1987. This pamphlet, based on interviews with a large number of non-Jewish rescuers and Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, focuses on important character traits shared by virtually all rescuers. SC.

Frank, Anne. ***The Diary of a Young Girl***. New York: Washington Square Press. 1970. The famous account of a Jewish girl and her family in hiding under the protection of Dutch friends, until the family is discovered by the Gestapo and deported to a concentration camp. JSC.

Friedman, Philip. ***Their Brother's Keepers: The Christian Heroes and Heroines Who Helped the Oppressed Escape the Nazi Terror***. New York: Schocken, 1978. One of the first books written about European non-Jews who aided Jews. SC.

Hallie, Philip. ***Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed***. New York: Harper & Row, 1979. A philosopher's reflections on the village of Le Chambon, emphasizing the role of Pastor André and Magda Trocmé in the rescue effort. C.

Hilberg, Raul. ***The Destruction of the European Jews***. (Student Edition.) New York: Holmes and Meier. 1985. Focuses on the machinery of destruction and the bureaucratic network that set the machinery in motion. SC.

Huneke, Douglas K. ***The Moses of Rovno***. New York: Dodd, Mead &

Co., 1985. The story of Hermann Graebe, a German civilian who rescued Jews in Poland. Insightful and helpful, especially for teachers and clergy who want to reflect on why people helped. SC.

Meltzer, Milton. ***Rescue: The Story of How Gentiles Saved Jews in the Holocaust***. New York: Harper and Row, 1988. A book of particular value for younger readers. J.S.

Oliner, Samuel P. and Pearl M. Oliner. ***The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe***. New York: The Free Press, 1988. A sociological exploration into the experiences and motivations of individuals who aided Jews without compensation of any kind. SC.

Rittner, Carol and Sondra Myers, eds. ***The Courage to Care***. New York: New York University Press, 1986. Accounts of non-Jews who helped Jews during the Holocaust, and reflections by scholars from various disciplines. A section on Le Chambon includes a useful analysis of aspects of rescue by Pierre Sauvage, as well as an introductory text mistakenly attributed to him. SC.

Tec, Nechama. "The Rescuer-Rescued Relationship: How Did It Begin?" ***Dimensions: A Journal of Holocaust Studies***, Vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 4-7. Argues that protection offered by some individual Poles to persecuted Polish Jewry was unplanned. SC.

"Was There 'Another Europe'? New Light on Rescue and Rescuers" (special issue). ***Dimensions: A Journal of Holocaust Studies***, Vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 3-17. Articles by Harold M. Schulweis, Eva Fogelman, Luitgard N. Wundheiler, and Stephen P. Cohen. SC.

AUDIO-VISUAL

Act of Faith. 28 min./black and white/16mm film/¾" or ½" video. A film about the heroic role the Danes played in saving Jews from deportation. JS.

Avenue of the Just. 55 min./color/16mm film/¾" or ½" video. Explores the motivations of several rescuers. Includes rare interviews with Anne Frank's father and the people who hid the Frank family. JSC.

The Camera of My Family (ADL). 18 min./color/filmstrip/¾" or ½" video/viewer's guide. Award-winning production about one German-Jewish family before and during the years of Nazi rule. JSC.

The Courage to Care. 28 min./color/16 mm film/¾" or ½" video/viewer's guide. An unforgettable encounter with ordinary people who risked their lives to save Jews, performing extraordinary acts in an era of apathy and complicity. JSC.

Genocide (ADL). 52 min./color/16mm film/viewer's guide. Documentary film that explores the historical roots of the Holocaust. SC.

Joseph Schultz. 14 min./color/16mm film/¾" or ½" video/discussion guide. Vital questions concerning personal moral choice versus obedience to authority are raised in this film featuring a German soldier in WWII who refused an order to shoot civilians. JSC.

Nightmare: The Immigration of Joachim and Rachel. 23 minutes/color/16mm film. A dramatization of the harrowing experiences of two young orphans, a brother and a sister, who escape not only from the Warsaw ghetto but also from a train carrying passengers bound for certain death. J.

To Know Where They Are. 28 min./¾" or ½" video/viewer's guide. This video explores the moral complexities of rescue during the Holocaust years as it tells the story of a failed attempt by Polish women to rescue a Jewish family. SC.

with interview of Pierre Sauvage by C. Myers.

Weapons of the Spirit. The original 90-minute version, Available from First Run Features, 153 Waverly Place, New York, NY 10014. 924

FRIENDS OF LE CHAMBON
8033 SUNSET BOULEVARD, #784
LOS ANGELES, CA 90046

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Dimensions: A Journal of Holocaust Studies. Published three times a year by ADL's Braun Center for Holocaust Studies. Essays, excerpts from survivors' testimonies, reviews, book selections, and an international calendar of events. $12.00 one year (3 issues), $20.00 two years (6 issues). SC.

The Holocaust: An Annotated Bibliography and Resource Guide, ed. David M. Szonyi. New York: KTAV, 1985. Lists resources on subjects related to learning about or teaching the Holocaust, as well as to programming ideas and commemorations. JSC.

The Holocaust: Catalog of Publications and Audio-Vidual Materials. Compiled by the ADL's Braun Center for Holocaust Studies. Lists more than 185 annotated and graded resources in ten subject areas,

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The Holocaust in Books and Films: A Selected, Annotated List (revised and expanded edition), ed. Judith Herschlag Muffs; gen. ed. Dennis B. Klein. (New York: ADL/Hippocrene Books, 1986.) Lists over 400 resources, new and classic. JSC.

The Record: The Holocaust in History, 1933-1945 (revised). Reconstructs the Holocaust with period news reports and photographs; includes section on rescuers. Discussion guide and glossary of terms. Newspaper format. JS.

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THE HOLOCAUST IN FRENCH FILM

by

ANDRÉ PIERRE COLOMBAT

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10. Pierre Sauvage's *Weapons of the Spirit* 345-365

Conclusion 367-374

Appendix: An Interview with Pierre Sauvage 375-387

Pierre Sauvage's *Weapons of the Spirit* is a personal and modest masterpiece that nonetheless can be compared to the best achievements of the monumental *Shoah* and *The Sorrow and the Pity*. It represents unfortunately a tiny event and an extraordinary exception in the history of the extermination of the European Jews during World War II. However, what happened in Le Chambon raises many fundamental questions for our own future. Because Pierre Sauvage's film renders the "spirit" of the Chambonnais with outstanding faithfulness and integrity, it can and must play a key role in our necessary reflection on the best strategies to be adopted in order to fight bigotry, intolerance and ultimately hate crimes.

Pierre Sauvage's *Weapons of the Spirit* is an inspiring tribute to the five thousand villagers of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon who rescued five thousand Jews, mostly children, in Occupied France. The director himself was born in Le Chambon in 1944. His documentary is based on the story of his own return to Le Chambon, on his discovery of the villagers' sturdy, life-saving values and on Pierre Sauvage's continued quest for understanding why it was so "natural" to the people of Le Chambon to save Jews at a time when the world seemed to have turned its back on them.

The greatest achievement of Sauvage's documentary, as a cinematographic work, is the perfect adequacy of its form with the "spirit" of the villagers. Like the people of Le Chambon, *Weapons of the Spirit* is simple only in appearance. It is a story with no hero, no traitor, no liberator, no ideology to justify. It is a profound description and analysis of the complex "simplicity" of a "conspiracy of goodness" that saved thousands of lives.

Sauvage clearly presents the story of Le Chambon as an extraordinary one. He always reminds the audience that the Shoah was to exterminate every European Jew, including the elderly and the children. For this reason, Sauvage's work never creates hope from the Shoah but from a few very ordinary people who always opposed bigotry and intolerance without fail and without agonizing about their decisions. Because of the memory this film saves, because of the importance of the questions it raises for our future and the exceptional skills of its director in rendering faithfully the heart of his subject, *Weapons of the Spirit* is a modest but irreplaceable "little brother" of *Shoah*. These points will be analyzed and demonstrated in the detailed study of this film.

10. Pierre Sauvage's *Weapons of the Spirit*

Pierre Sauvage's documentary *Weapons of the Spirit* presents itself as a very personal investigation about a rather disorienting mystery. Pierre Sauvage's work is a deliberate attempt to understand why an entire population rescued thousands of Jews so "naturally," with so much "simplicity" while the whole world appeared to have turned its back on their persecution by the Nazis and the Collaborators. The entire film tries to understand not only how the Christians of the village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon saved the lives of at least five thousand Jews but also why it appeared so obvious to them that "it was the only thing to do." Pierre Sauvage's own parents found refuge in Le Chambon where the director himself was born on March 25, 1944. Consequently, the most apparent characteristic of this film is that it presents, in a very personal manner, a whole community of rescuers, as very solid, independent, religious and simple people who acted without agonizing rather than agonizing without acting.[78]

Thematically, three main leitmotives will reappear throughout the film, explaining in part why Le Chambon was such an exception in occupied France. First, Sauvage and the villagers themselves recognize that the community was able to learn from its past as a population of Huguenots that had been persecuted for their religious beliefs since the seventeenth century. Even at a more individual level, Pastor Trocmé and his wife Magda had been able to see with their own eyes and to tell the people of Le Chambon what had happened to the Jews during the thirties in Mussolini's Italy (Magda Trocmé) and in Hitler's Germany (Magda and André Trocmé).

Second, their own historical awareness combined itself with a unpretentious and solid faith that always refused to separate its actions from values. When the director asks Pastor Edouard Theis to summarize his faith, his answer is:

E. Theis: You shall love your God with all your heart, your soul, your mind, *and your neighbor as yourself* (E. Theis' emphasis).

P. Sauvage: That's the summary?

E. Theis: Yes. (pause) Of course.

In any other context, this answer could have sounded like pure rhetoric and somewhat pretentious. However, the history, the reserve, the simplicity, the directness and the conviction of the people of Le Chambon make of this unadorned definition a very powerful and convincing statement. Consequently, as we will see in the following pages, the very first quality of Pierre Sauvage's film is its perfect respect and rendering of the "spirit" of the people of Le Chambon.

Third, the people of Le Chambon are presented from the very beginning of the film as totally opposed to Marshal Pétain's armistice and politics of Collaboration with Germany. As Edouard Theis put it: "We considered Vichy as nothing." It was indeed the very day after the signature of the armistice that André Trocmé made his most influential sermon:

> The duty of the Christians is to resist the violence imposed on their conscience with *the weapons of the spirit*. We shall resist when our adversaries will demand that we submit to orders contrary to the ones of the Gospel. We shall do it without fear, but also without pride and without hatred (my emphasis) (Quoted by Pierre Fayol, 38).

The Chambonnais had made up their minds since they had heard the speech of the *Préfet* André Philipp explaining one of Pétain's first decisions was to return the German refugees to the Nazis. Throughout the documentary, dozens of crossed references will repeat these three important themes. They characterize the Chambonnais as an actively religious and simple people that is both historically and politically aware of their time.

Beyond the attempt to understand what happened in Le Chambon, Pierre Sauvage's film is thematically unified by a more general question. As the film constantly recalls that the entire community took part in the rescue effort, it also analyzes

the influence the attitude of the Chambonnais had on the local authorities and on some German soldiers as well. The film suggests clearly that what took place in Le Chambon for five years was also possible because the *Préfet* Robert Bach, some members of the Vichy police, some Vichy officials, some German soldiers and even a German officer (Major Julius Schmähling) never really reported to higher authorities what was going on in the village.

For Pierre Sauvage, the Chambonnais also succeeded because they had involuntarily started a "conspiracy of goodness." *Weapons of the Spirit* analyzes ultimately how such a "conspiracy" worked and what it could teach us for our own future facing anti-Semitism, bigotry, and intolerance in general. This point raises the question of Pierre Sauvage's still on-going interpretation of what happened in Le Chambon. On one hand, one can wonder, for example, if this film does not exaggerate the power of active "goodness" when directly faced with mass murderers. On the other hand, Sauvage never fails to recall that Le Chambon is geographically isolated and that it constitutes an exception. Only a more detailed study of the film itself can provide us with the beginning of an answer to the various problems it raises about the limits of this "conspiracy of goodness."

In many respects Pierre Sauvage appears to be obsessed with his unending attempt to understand this "conspiracy of goodness." In a similar manner Claude Lanzmann was obsessed with the impossibility to represent the unspeakable horror of the Shoah. Like Lanzmann, Pierre Sauvage keeps on repeating similar questions to different people and each time he gets a slightly different answer. He also needed to meet the people of Le Chambon, to film their faces and their emotions, to ask them precise questions, to draw a map of the region, to understand who was doing what and when. In the end the mystery is not solved however the memory of a people is saved while the film raises many key questions that directly concern our future.

Consequently, *Weapons of the Spirit* develops according to two parallel axes. The first one is a very personal search and

study of the "spirit" of an exceptional community; the second is a presentation of the history of the same community within the general framework of the history of persecution of the European Jews during World War II. The two combine in the general analysis of the implications of what happened in Le Chambon for our own future ethics of action.

Weapons of the Spirit is first of all Pierre Sauvage's quest for understanding of what happened in Le Chambon. Combining the three themes of historical awareness, active values, and political commitment, the documentary chronologically develops as follows:

Introduction:
- The director returns to Le Chambon to find out why he was saved while "the spiritual plague" that produced the Holocaust had exterminated most of his mother's family.
- Arrival and first encounter with Le Chambon; thankful rescuees and simplicity of the rescuers. A picture of M. and Mme. Héritier during the war with the opening credits.

Part I: (1940-1941)
- Historical summary of the first months of the war, the defeat, the invasion, the Occupation, the Collaboration, Pétain and the anti-Semitic campaigns of the Vichy regime.
- General presentation of Le Chambon (geography, history), its people, what they did and why they did it ("They risked their lives"; "It happened quite simply").
- "The area found spiritual leaders it needed and deserved"; André Trocmé, Edouard Theis, Magda Trocmé ("a dishonorable armistice," "love one another," "resist with the weapons of the spirit," "We just had a difficult past").

Part II: (1942)
- Heydrich in France, the systematic persecution and deportation of the Jews in France (drawings, names and photographs of the victims).

- The Jewish children in Le Chambon; Peter Feigl returns; finding a home for the children (Mme. Dreyfus); taking some children out of the French concentration camps; international help organizations (Swiss and American); organizing school for the children; a perfect integration; the underground railroad to Switzerland ("If we'd had an organization we would have failed"; "It was a general consensus," Magda Trocmé).
- The total respect for Jewish religion ("For us they were the people of God," Marie Brottes).
- Non-violent resistance to Lamirand and the Vichy Government; Lamirand in Le Chambon; a Vichy police raid in Le Chambon.

Part III: (1943-1944)
- December of 1942—Invasion of the "free zone" by the Germans; organization of the armed resistance; the Germans in Le Chambon.
- A center for the making of false identifications (Oskar Rosowsky, alias Jean-Claude Plunne); a Vichy policeman in Le Chambon ("I'm just about the only Jew in Le Chambon," Emile Sèches; "We were very scared," Ginette Weil).
- An orthodox Jew in Le Chambon (Marguerite Kohn). All her family was murdered in extermination camps.
- Christian apathy and responsibility in the Holocaust (Christian anti-Semitism and Pétain going to mass).
- What kind of Christians were the people of Le Chambon? ("It was a very solid faith that was put to the test and was not found wanting," Lesley Maber).
- Albert Camus in Le Chambon ("He was writing a book I think, and he was going for walks," Emile Grand).
- The "plague" arrives in Le Chambon. Arrest, beating and deportation of twenty four by the Gestapo. Daniel Trocmé's choice and death. The birth of the director. The murder of the doctor who had brought him to life (Roger le Forestier).
- Final contrast between Pétain's popularity and Le Chambon's freedom until the very last days of the war.

Conclusion:
- Did the Jews forget about their rescuers?
- The director's own story.
- What can be learned from the people of Le Chambon?

As this schematic summary shows, each major section of the documentary is introduced by historical footage. In this manner, the story of Le Chambon is always presented as an exception in its time. It also allows the director to indicate how the community reacted progressively to every new situation. It is Magda Trocmé who says in the film that if the village really had had an organization, the enterprise would have failed. Consequently the evolution of the film itself stresses the different ways of resisting the community created as it had to face constantly and rapidly changing historical situations.

Consequently, the ultimate repercussions of what happened in Le Chambon reach far beyond Pierre Sauvage's film itself. The director indicated ten directions for future research on who exactly were the Righteous Gentiles.

1) Just how Christian were these rescuers?
2) What sort of Christianity did they practice?
3) Can we learn something about non-violent resistance from the rescuers?
4) Do conventional male values limit our own perspective on resistance to the Holocaust?
5) How determinant was the sense of being socially marginal to the sense of active empathy for the plight of the Jews?
6) If self-esteem was characteristic of the rescuers, then how did they succeed in developing it in themselves and from their upbringing?
7) How do we learn to view the rescuers as ordinary people whom we can emulate rather than as inimitable saints?
8) How important is historical memory in the genesis of righteous conduct?
9) How does one recognize leaders in a time of moral decay and what form does their leadership take?

10) Did communal rescue efforts result because people placed their trust in the beneficence of collective responsibility or from understanding that collective responsibility can only occur when there is individual responsibility? (Sauvage, 1986: 252)

Weapons of the Spirit already suggests many partial answers to these questions. There is however one question I would like to add based on the documentary's final chapter.

The story of the people of Le Chambon deserves undoubtedly our deepest respect and our most profound reflection. However, as the end of the film requires, one must also consider what the exact limits of a "conspiracy of goodness" are. In its final chapter, however, *Weapons of the Spirit* recalls that the community of Le Chambon had been also very lucky. In spite of all the precautions taken, nothing could be done to prevent the arrest, the deportation and the murder of some of its people. If the village had long created and benefitted from a "conspiracy of goodness" that had extended to some Vichy officials, to the Préfet Bach and even to the German soldiers and officers in convalescence in Le Chambon, all of these efforts were powerless when directly faced with some of the most violent murderers the Third Reich produced, i.e. the Gestapo and men like Klaus Barbie.

One cannot simply deduce from this film that, for example, if the Polish farmers had acted like the people of Le Chambon it would have meant the end of the "Final Solution." On one hand, as *Shoah* recalls, the deeply rooted Christian anti-Semitism of the Polish farmers facilitated greatly the extermination of six millions Jews. On the other hand, *Weapons of the Spirit* testifies that the active goodness and the faith of five thousand Christians living in the geographically isolated Le Chambon was able to save at least five thousand Jews. But one cannot forget that when it is already too late to change the people itself, when directly faced with the SS, the Gestapo, war criminals and men like Klaus Barbie, saving lives requires strategies and actions that are entirely different from the ones mostly shown in the film. Consequently, a quite different but complementary film could

also be made on the Jewish armed resistance as it is briefly shown in Pierre Sauvage's masterpiece.

In many respects, Pierre Sauvage's *Weapons of the Spirit* can be considered as a "little brother," a very modest but essential supplement to *Shoah*. Pierre Sauvage did not see *Shoah* until after he completed his own documentary. However, both films reveal striking similarities in the ways they deal with their very different and specific subjects. While Lanzmann's work is a monumental presentation of the uniqueness of the Shoah that excludes France and insists on the systematic extermination of the European Jews in Poland; Sauvage's modest documentary analyzes the exception of a small French village of five thousand inhabitants that saved the lives of five thousand Jews against all odds. Moreover, Lanzmann's and Sauvage's works can be often characterized by the same fundamental qualities: the urgency they felt to return to the sites where the events they describe took place; their need to meet the "actors" of these events on the same sites; the image and the interviews they selected in order to respect and render the specificity of their respective subjects, i.e. the unspeakable horror of the Shoah for Lanzmann, and the "extraordinary simplicity" of the rescuers of Le Chambon for Sauvage.

While Lanzmann's most exceptional work confronts us once and for all with the fact that no European Jew, not even the children, were to be spared by the Nazis and their accomplices, Sauvage's work concentrates on one exceptional village which saved thousands of Jewish children. Only quick generalizations and a misunderstanding of the specificity of these two films could justify opposing them to each other. They both deal with different subjects and serve different purposes. However, they both participate in the same necessary preservation of the memory of the Holocaust for future generations.

Unfortunately, the differences between Lanzmann's and Sauvage's works are sometimes presented as being opposed and irreconcilable. In the United States, Michael Berenbaum rightfully insisted on the fact that: "the Holocaust is primarily about defeat not about victory, about tragedy and not triumph, about failure

not success."[79] Pierre Sauvage is very well aware of that fact and has never put it in question. However, Berenbaum went so far as to characterize the Holocaust as the "mysterium tremendum," "the awesome mystery—which cannot be penetrated," because "the Holocaust defies meaning and negates hope. The scope of victimization reduces even survival to a nullity. The reality of Auschwitz should silence the optimists."[80]

Berenbaum's extreme interpretation could in part illustrate Lanzmann's focus in the making of *Shoah* insisting on the heart of the systematic extermination of the Jews. Indeed for Lanzmann, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, "understanding" why the Jews were massacred would provide a logical genesis of death, and ultimately, an excuse for the executioners as victims of their times. For this reason, in Berenbaum's words, the Shoah will always "defy meaning." However, it is also to be remembered that, as Lanzmann wrote: "the purpose of the theory of the aberration (of the Holocaust) is today to sweep away the idea of *historical responsibility*, the responsibility of Germany and that of the nations" (in Deguy, 310-311). Then, in parallel with everything he wrote against the "understanding" of the mass murder itself, Lanzmann concludes that: "we must hold strongly both ends of the chain: *the Holocaust is unique but not aberrant*" (in Deguy, 311).

What is "aberrant" is what Lanzmann called: "to pass to the act; to kill" (in Deguy, 289). Understanding or comprehending a historical period is not synonymous with making logical or forgiving the atrocities that have been committed in these times. Collective and historical situations never free anybody from individual choices and individual responsibilities; they just make it easier to find false justifications to personal actions. For this reason, it is essential to *understand* the historical and collective contexts that allowed many individuals to make many personal choices and commit *aberrant* crimes under the cover of historical pressure. It is also to be recalled that, for similar reasons, Marcel Ophüls refuses to believe in collective guilt.

Consequently, Berenbaum's conclusion, with its total rejection of hope, does not derive directly from its premises and

it mixes up various issues that are not synonymous as his argument pretends. What is missing in order to articulate the two aspects of Lanzmann's thought—"it is impossible to 'understand' the Shoah" and "the Holocaust is not aberrant"—is a detailed reflection on the relationship between *collective* and *individual* responsibility. Indeed, the Shoah itself defies meaning because the murder of six million Jews serves no purpose whatsoever. However, this does not systematically imply that it negates hope. In equating the hopeful with the optimist, Berenbaum ironically assimilates hope with dull and blind optimism. The Shoah generates no hope. However the people who tried to fight it do. The kind of hope they inspire has not been created by Auschwitz but has survived in spite of Auschwitz. The people of Le Chambon acted the same before, during and after the war. They are exceptional people precisely because their self esteem, their life style and their values were strong enough so that they did not vanish when their faith was put on trial.

Consequently, Pierre Sauvage's film does not derive hope *from* the Shoah but from *an extraordinary exception* making it clear that each individual is always entirely responsible for his/her "illogical" actions of love or of hatred. Regarding another reproach indicating that he paid too much attention to an exceptional situation, the director himself answered:

> "*There were so few of them.*" As if moral or spiritual significance is a matter of numbers. As if we even knew the numbers in this largely uncharted chapter of our past. As if we did not believe, we Jews especially, that even tiny minorities may own important, perhaps even divine, truths (Sauvage, 1983: 31).

Pierre Sauvage's *Weapons of the Spirit* constantly recalls that the villagers of Le Chambon represented an almost unique exception. His film allows no one to forget about widespread anti-Semitism nor about the most horrifying reality of the Holocaust. It simply recalls that for a very few ordinary people, it was indeed possible and quite "natural" to save the Jews. Such a statement does not give any "meaning" to the Holocaust nor does it let us forget that the Shoah was perpetrated by Christian

anti-Semites. It simply and realistically teaches us that the Holocaust was not part of an unavoidable fate and that the attitude of some rare and isolated men and women can teach us how to prevent it from happening again. As many American critics did, Laurence Jarvik noted that for Sauvage, "Le Chambon is an indictment of every other community that could have done what Le Chambon did."[81]

For this reason Pierre Sauvage's hopefulness is vital to many precisely because it has nothing to do with a blind "optimism." Next to Lanzmann's gigantic masterpiece about the extermination of the European Jews, *Weapons of the Spirit* remains a modest but fundamental film, a dim and extremely fragile light in an ocean of darkness. After seeing *Shoah* the spectator experiences an infinite part of the despair of a man that has spent ten years of his life "licking the poisonous heart of humanity," while *Weapons of the Spirit* is a tribute to the few anonymous Gentiles who risked their lives to save some Jews including the director himself and his family.

The film starts in a small, bright and totally opened mountain train. This convoy contrasts with the deportation trains that run throughout *Shoah*. Instead of bringing to their deaths thousands of anonymous victims, this train saved three very precise individuals: Pierre Sauvage, his mother and his father. Like *Shoah*, the film also insists on a very specific place and still living bystanders. These are directly opposed to the concentration camps and the anti-Semites shown in Lanzmann's film. Finally, while there is no music in *Shoah* except to evoke the anguish, the despair and the suffering of the Jews, the music used in *Weapons of the Spirit* is very reassuring, light hearted, never ironic and never anguishing.

Considering the specificity of its symmetrically opposite subject (the rule/one exception; the horror of an unspeakable crime/the simplicity of goodness; a monumental work/a modest tribute), Sauvage's film reveals some of the key reactions of the director confronted with his subject that are also found in *Shoah*. As Lanzmann did, Sauvage felt the need to *return* to the places where "the event" took place (Poland/Le Chambon). This first

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encounter provoked a violent shock that completely changed both Lanzmann's and Sauvage's lives because they realized that the same people were living in the present in the same places with the same values (the Polish anti-Semitism/the simple goodness of the people of Le Chambon).

Finally, both films are based on a unsolvable mystery. For Lanzmann, there is no "understanding" possible of the horror of the Shoah. The goal of the film is precisely to "transmit" the memory of this most unspeakable event as such. For Pierre Sauvage, the exact reason why it was so "natural" to the people of Le Chambon to decide to "pass to the act" of saving Jews will always have a part of mystery. It is however essential to try to understand in what historical, geographical, moral and religious contexts their action was possible, even if none of this will ever absolutely explain what they did nor totally protect us from the resurgence of hatred. The individual remains at all times responsible for his choices and actions. For all these reasons, I consider the success of the modest *Weapons of the Spirit* as being in part comparable to the best achievements of the monumental and irreplaceable *Shoah*.

Like *Shoah*, *Weapons of the Spirit* starts with a long silence allowing the audience to read a text on a dark screen. This text is the following quote from Albert Camus' *The Plague*:

> There always comes a time in history when the person who dares to say that two plus two equals four is punished with death. And the issue is not what reward or what punishment will be the outcome of that reasoning. The issue is simply whether or not two plus two equals four.

We will learn later on in the film that Camus wrote part of *The Plague* in Le Chambon and that his stay in the community had a strong influence on his composition of this literary masterpiece. While imposing silence on the spectator before entering the community of Le Chambon, this text reminds us that in critical situations like during World War II, the simple fact of standing up for basic truths and human values can be punished by death. In such a context, real heroism does not consist in making great

self-justifying speeches but in acting according to some very simple but fundamental truths.

Historians have rightfully emphasized the fact that the people who rescued Jews during the war were very often farmers, workers, people of popular origins with little formal education. Unlike some members of the Résistance or official party members, these people neither gained nor asked for official glorification after the war. As their deeds did not influence major war time turning points but represented an everyday life total commitment, historians of the Second World War have largely forgotten to study them. As their religious convictions and basic moral principles often underlined the inefficiency of modern ideologies when faced with crimes against humanity, idealogues have also forgotten to analyze what appears to be the only beliefs that directly lead to an unquestioned action for the rescue of victims of the Nazis' mass murders.

For this reason, the very first quality of Pierre Sauvage's film is its absolute success in rendering the simplicity of the total commitment of the Chambonnais. When asked why they hid Jews at the risk of their lives, the people of Le Chambon give answers such as: "We never asked for explanations. Nobody asked anything. When people came, if we could be of help..." (M. Héritier), "We were used to it" (Mme. Héritier), "It all happened very simply. We did not ask ourselves why we were doing it. It was the human thing to do or something like that... that's all" (M. Darcissac).

The camera never fails to show the uneasiness these men and women feel at being made some sort of local heroes. They look at the interviewer to see if he has any other question and then they look at their feet because there is nothing else to say. They "just" did what had to be done and there is nothing else to say about it. As Mme. Barraud put it "It happened so naturally, we cannot understand the fuss. It happened simply (....) I helped because they needed help." While Sauvage's film has been sometimes criticized for its "simplicity," one has to underline the fact that the same "simplicity" characterizes best the people of Le Chambon. Consequently it is the only "style" Sauvage could use

in his film without betraying the essence of the community he wanted to portray. Moreover it is this "simplicity" that saved at least five thousand lives including thousands of Jewish children. For this very reason it deserves no irony and it demands our most dedicated attention.

What is most disturbing for a "modern" audience, as Jean Hatzfeld underlined in the *Cahiers du cinéma*, is the fact that "no one in this film plays the role of the hero, the traitor, the victim as we find them in classical drama" (Hatzfeld, 9). This explains in part the limited success this film had in France, a country in which largely elitist intellectual life is still very much oriented by belief in the leading role idealogues should play based on their prior education in highly selective government controlled schools. Albert Camus himself can be considered as a victim of such an exclusive conception of the formation of an intellectual. On the other end, Sauvage's film was a much greater success in the United States, and in California in particular, where one's immediate community life plays a much more important role in determining individual commitments.

There was indeed no "hero" in Le Chambon, no "theory" and no "heroic" leader either. As Laurence Jarvik put it, this film is about a community who was "actively doing good instead of rationalizing doing nothing." Even Pastor André Trocmé who gave most of the cohesion to the community is presented as nothing but the leader that this community deserved. He and his wife were militant pacifists who always stood up for their beliefs even when, in 1939, all the villagers disagreed with them. André Trocmé could play the major role he did in Le Chambon only because the whole community accepted and recognized his authority based on his active values and sincere faith. In this simple but fundamental manner, *Weapons of the Spirit* establishes a very clear relationship between individual responsibility, collective responsibility and leadership. By contrast, at the end of the film, Marshal Philippe Pétain will also be characterized by Sauvage as "the leader (France) deserved" at that time.

Following the quotation of Camus, the first words of the film are pronounced by the director himself: "I am a Jew." While

Shoah reveals nothing directly about the identity of its director, *Weapons of the Spirit* appears from the very beginning as a personal film based on a clear personal motivation. From this point on, Sauvage's film also becomes a quest towards one's origins and the understanding of why what had been possible and so "natural" in the village of Le Chambon remained an exception in France and throughout Europe where the apathy and the bigotry described in *Shoah* dominated.

Sauvage's film is constantly linked to the personal experience and personality of its director. It is a film Pierre Sauvage made for three parallel purposes: so he could himself understand "the mystery" of Le Chambon; so he could pay tribute to the memory of the people who saved his family; so he could try to learn what moral lessons we can drawn from this community's actions for future generation and especially for the director's own son, David. It is always presented as an exceptional, individual and ordinary tale. Consequently, Pierre Sauvage's work, like the actions of the Chambonnais, can be best characterized both by its personal and collective implications as the two cannot be separated from each other. In this sense we are here at the direct opposite of Ophüls' and Lanzmann's works which privileged individual or collective responsibilities respectively.

After spending the first four years of his life in France, Pierre Sauvage moved with his parents to New York City. He attended the Lycée Français in New York and then went back to France to pursue literary studies at the renowned Lycée Henri IV in Paris. He took some classes at the Sorbonne. After dropping out of school he started working at the Cinémathèque Française under the direction of the famous Henri Langlois. From that date he became a dedicated man of cinema. His parents, journalist and writer Léo Sauvage and Barbara Sauvage née Suchowolski, did not tell him he was Jewish until he turned eighteen. Pierre Sauvage grew up as a non-religious man. They did not want him to live in the past and they did not tell their son about Le Chambon either. As a result they did not support the project of making the film. It is mostly after he met his wife, Barbara M.

Rubin, and had a son that Pierre Sauvage felt a strong need to learn about his past and his Jewish heritage: "Without the birth of my son and my wife's prodding, *Weapons of the Spirit* would not have been made. For me, making the film was a growing experience" (Johnson, 12).

In this regard, the project of making this documentary fits perfectly with the teaching of the people of Le Chambon as it always refuses to separate one's values and ideological commitments from one's actions and concern for one's immediate surroundings and vice versa. If this film was to make sense for thousands of anonymous spectators worldwide it first had to make sense for the director's own son:

> This is why, as I tell David of these things, as he learns that there is in all of us a capacity for evil and an even greater and more insidious capacity for apathy, I want him to learn that the stories of the righteous are not footnotes to the past but cornerstones to the future. I owe my life to the good people of Le Chambon. I owe even more than that to my son (Sauvage, 1983: 36).

Here again, individual commitments are inseparable from collective or more universal responsibilities. It is because this film was made from a personal, sincere and profound need of its director that it was ultimately able to convey the complex simplicity of the people of Le Chambon without reducing its mystery to a purely "objective" reasoning or to the point of view of a specialist. As Sauvage himself indicated, the people of Le Chambon were "very reluctant" when he told them he wanted to film them: "They were very wary. They believe that to appear to trumpet your deeds is to devalue them" (Bernstein, 36). A villager of Le Chambon confirmed the same statement:

> An attempt was made by a American team to make a film about Le Chambon as a harbour for refugees and a center for active Résistance to the Occupation. For that reason, at his request, I had a very pleasant meeting with M. Carl Foreman who was supposed to write the scenario of the film. He was famous for having worked on films such as *The Bridge on the River Kwai* and *The Guns of Navarone*.
>
> We feared, Dr. Rosowsky (Jean-Claude Plunne) and myself, that a large audience film would be forced to respect the commercial requirements and that it would be unable to limit itself to the strict reality of the facts. For that reason, we rejected his offer.
>
> On the contrary, we had a great interest in Pierre Sauvage's project because of his attachment to Le Chambon where he was born in 1944 and because he decided to base his film only on interviews of the witnesses, without any intrigue. This seemed to guarantee his sincerity (Pierre Fayol, 22).

Like the director of *Shoah*, but dealing with an opposite subject, the director of *Weapons of the Spirit* felt a powerful personal need to tell his "story" in a manner that would respect entirely the complexity and the mystery of its subject, even if in this case the subject is the "simplicity" of a rural protestant community.

Consequently, *Weapons of the Spirit* is best characterized, at the same time, by its clarity, its coherence and the complexity of its structure and of the questions its raises. The director combines international and local events, various studies of characters and personal history with outstanding mastery. The film is never confusing in spite of its alluding to dozens of different and most often unknown individuals, including thirty four villagers of Le Chambon. If the main "story" is a very personal search for the understanding of an exceptional community, the backbone of the narration follows the chronology of the war and that of the persecution of the Jews in occupied France. The film does not forget one key aspect of the history of this community and always situates it within the more general frame of French history. At the same time it is able to present a most faithful and vivid analysis of the people involved with the events described. Because it was able to successfully achieve all these goals at the same time, the apparent "simplicity" of Pierre Sauvage's film is certainly its most complex achievement.

As the work of a man of cinema about Occupied France, *Weapons of the Spirit* often recalls some of the best sequences of Marcel Ophüls' *The Sorrow and the Pity*. Like Ophüls' masterpiece, Pierre Sauvage's work intertwines historical footage and black and white pictures with contemporary interviews while following the chronology of the events. Sauvage's film is also a very successful attempt to make visible the personality, the emotions and the deep motivations of the witnesses he interviews. In this regard, the director never fails to include an expression, a gesture or glance from the witnesses that reveals more about these people than any word could. The camera also includes all the elements of the setting that can bring more information about the witness being interviewed.

In this respect, the second interview of Pastor Edouard Theis is extremely revealing of the best cinematographic qualities of Sauvage's film. The sequence starts with a vertical panning showing a picture of Martin Luther King and a picture of Gandhi posted on Theis' bulletin board in his study. In the same movement, the camera encounters drawings made by children, a photograph of a woman holding a child in her arms, a copy of the *Old Testament*, other books and then pauses briefly on Theis' hands while Sauvage asks the Pastor to summarize his faith in a few words. After this, the camera films Theis' face, looking at the director while he gives his answer: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." In the middle of this answer, we see Theis' hands opening up and raising up in order to reinforce the idea that this answer is so obvious that the question itself seems a little dull. While finishing his answer, Theis lightly raises his shoulders and looks Sauvage straight in the eyes. Sauvage asks him: "That's it? It just had to be applied?", Theis firmly replies: "Yes! Of course!" and then he lowers his eyes simply because there is nothing else to say until the next question comes.

In such a sequence, the cameraman included all the elements of the natural setting that could reveal the personality of the interviewee. This is extremely important as the people of Le Chambon are very softspoken and uncomfortable at being made

the stars of a film. Pierre Sauvage's interviewing technique always respects the personality of these people and his editing of the film reveals in a powerful manner everything that Theis' simplicity does not allow him to put in words, i.e. Theis' pacifism and non-violent activism (King's and Gandhi's pictures), his dedication to children and his community (the photograph with a woman holding a child), his faith (the *Old Testament*), his rugged life in a mountain village (his hands and face), the strength of his faith (the movements of his opening hands and his straight forward look at the interviewer) and his sincere unwillingness to become some sort of a local hero (his looking down at his hands after he is done answering the question). All this is expressed in the same and continuous movement of the camera that insists on the fact that all these elements are part of Theis himself. The editing had to bring no exterior element or tricks in order to reveal the personality of this man.

In contrast with this sequence is the interview of Lamirand, the former Youth Minister of Vichy. Lamirand is filmed sitting in a heavy armchair that holds his body perfectly, limiting uncontrolled gestures to the strict minimum. At first he looks the director straight in the eye, bending slightly his head on his left shoulder in order to show that he has nothing to hide and that he is doing his best to understand and answer the questions.

Lamirand's first answers about his visit in Le Chambon are obviously well prepared. However, when he is being asked about his personal responsibilities in the deportation of seventy five thousand Jews from France, his eyelids reveal a very nervous and uncontrollable agitation. The camera then shows him joining his hands as he justifies himself by explaining that, at that time, he did not know anything about the deportations of the Jews. The interview ends with a short segment in which Lamirand explains that he has "many Jewish friends." Therefore, he had nothing to do with the persecution of the Jews.

Lamirand's conclusion represents one of the very few touches of irony in Sauvage's film. Sauvage borrowed many interviewing and editing techniques from Ophüls but, because of his subject, he almost never used Ophüls' characteristic irony. By

contrast, the villagers are often very humorous especially when describing the various subterfuges the village put together to hide the identity of the refugees. In order to respect and render the "spirit" and the goodness of the people of Le Chambon, Sauvage could not use sarcasm nor too much irony while they represented perfect tools for Ophüls' subject and witnesses.

Finally, like Ophüls, Sauvage uses much historical footage or newsreels in order to reinforce the chronology of the film and to put the testimonies in contrast with national and international events. However, Sauvage's use of old photographs is very characteristic of the director's personal style. Prior to making his film, Sauvage gathered literally thousands of pictures of Le Chambon. These pictures are included in the film with three main purposes.

First, many pictures disclose what it was like to live in Le Chambon. That's what happens for instance with the many group pictures showing children studying or at play or people doing farm work. In this case, pictures allow us to visualize the various testimonies heard in the present and to see some of the children refugees. They take us back from the nineteen eighties to the nineteen forties. Second, other pictures show places that no longer exist like the terrace of the *Coteau Fleuri*. They also take us from the present to the past while allowing us to imagine everyday life in Le Chambon.

The last use of pictures by Sauvage is most crucial and characteristic of his film. It consists in showing old portraits of the people involved, in putting them in parallel with the faces of the same people in the present or in superimposing old pictures of the same people at different ages in order to indicate their growing up. By using the first technique, the audience is constantly being reminded that the children of Le Chambon looked just like today's children. This is a story that could be ours. These people cannot be reduced to names or statistics in a history book.

Second, by putting in parallel old pictures and contemporary faces of the same people, Sauvage insists on the fact that the Chambonnais, like Henri and Emma Héritier, have not changed

since the war. Of course they became older but their expressions, their lifestyle and their values remained the same. Consequently, the story of Le Chambon belongs to our own present. Even today it is possible to think, live or act like the Chambonnais did almost fifty years ago.

Third, the superimposing of portraits of the same people at different ages underlines the fact that throughout their lives these men and women, at least in spirit, belonged to the same community and that the moral strength and simplicity shown on their faces was not just an attitude put on for the time of a picture taking. For this reason, the openness and calm shown on the pictures of Daniel Trocmé and Roger Le Forestier contrast violently with the commentary's evocation of their violent deaths as they were both assassinated by the Nazis. By using these three different ways to include old photographs in his documentary, the director once more characterizes his film as a work dedicated to saving the memory of a community of individuals that always claimed responsibility for each one of its actions, even when facing the utmost danger.

Pierre Sauvage's *Weapons of the Spirit* is a personal and modest masterpiece that nonetheless can be compared to the best achievements of the monumental *Shoah* and *The Sorrow and the Pity*. It represents unfortunately a tiny event and an extraordinary exception in the history of the extermination of the European Jews during World War II. However, what happened in Le Chambon raises many fundamental questions for our own future. Because Pierre Sauvage's film renders the "spirit" of the Chambonnais with outstanding faithfulness and integrity, it can and must play a key role in our necessary reflection on the best strategies to be adopted in order to fight bigotry, intolerance and ultimately hate crimes.

In spite of this tardiness in coming to terms with the most dreadful chapter of modern French history, one must recognize that several French directors have finally succeeded in producing major masterpieces offering highly dependable representations of extremely complex and distressing events. As the preceding remarks suggest there are still many aspects of these times and events that cinema has not yet represented. However the massive demonstrations and the many official condemnations that took place in France after recent anti-Semitic incidents prove that considerable numbers of the French population are now very much aware of the dangers and the consequences of recurring waves of anti-Semitism and hatred.

The evolution of the representation of the Holocaust in French cinema since 1967 certainly played a major role in the increase of this public awareness. As everywhere else in the world, including the United States, there are still politicians in France that try to use anti-Semitism and politics of hatred for the benefit of their personal influence. However, their propaganda is also opposed by a better preserved memory of the truth. By its continuing struggle to offer an always more complete and truthful memory of the Holocaust and of the persecution of the Jews, several masterpieces of French cinema can be considered as exceptional media to fight anti-Semitism and bigotry in France or anywhere else.

Appendix:
An Interview with Pierre Sauvage

A: What are the different circumstances that brought you to make *Weapons of the Spirit*?

P: To begin with, I could not have made it earlier, as I was not interested enough in the subject or psychologically equipped to deal with it. I also was not professionally in a position to make such a film. The film really happened precisely when it needed to happen. And since my parents initially did not want me to make the film, it was also something that I had to undertake at a time when I was able to negotiate with them.

A: Your wife also played an important role?

P: My wife played a very important role in telling me that being Jewish was important. I cannot overstate how inconceivable it is that the film could have been made another time considering what it is saying: that a sense of rootedness and identity is important; that religion can be a source of good. These are things that I did not believe *at all* a few years before making the film.

A: There was also a great curiosity on your part at the outset?

P: I think there was. At the point where I decided to make it, I was already quite interested in the Holocaust, and had begun attempting to understand it and figure out what its importance is to me personally. I had also begun realizing that one legacy that my father had tried to give me was a very dangerous one: that one can simply discard the past; that it is not important. Then I went back to Le Chambon on

a visit and was just stunned by the people there. I felt that there was something special about them, something special about their faces. But even when I started shooting I had no idea what the film was going to end up being.

A: You had no script.

P: No, I have never done a documentary with a script.

A: How did people react in Le Chambon when you told them you wanted to make a film about them?

P: They were wary. They were certainly not excited about the idea. They are very modest people, and the last thing they would want is for others to think that they are promoting themselves.

A: Did they put any restrictions on you in terms of making the film?

P: They really did not. Nobody refused anything. Even the old family photographs I asked to film. I think a certain trust set in. It started by filming people I knew and the word got around. I do not doubt for a second that the fact that I had been born there meant a lot. It was simply a sense that . . .

A: . . . they could trust you?

P: Yes. And that this was meant to be.

A: There had been other films made about their story.

P: Not really. There have been small attempts, little television programs. Marcel Ophüls told me afterwards that he had been thinking of doing it but had learned that I was about to do it. It didn't matter that *I* was doing it, but that someone was doing it.

A: You use a lot of faces in your film as well as pictures, old and more recent pictures. What is their precise role in your film?

P: I really think faces are important and I really like knowing what people look like. I have always been curious about what people look like at various stages of their life. Probably the boldest sequence along those lines in the film is actually when, in talking about Roger Le Forestier's death, I show pictures of him as a child and then as he gets older and older. I realize that it is sort of a strange sequence and I am still not sure if the viewers get it right away or if they think it's someone else. I guess they understand it eventually. But it was very meaningful to me. When a man is killed it is the person he was in all the previous years and the child that are killed too. This brings it home in a way.

A: Concerning the filming of the faces and the people... did you give any instructions to the cameramen?

P: Nothing important. I had a very good cameraman, Yves Dahan.

A: You worked with the same team all along?

P: Yes. They were very committed—just fantastic. They really got into it.

A: They did not understand what people were saying?

P: Oh no. This was a French crew and so they understood everything.

A: Did you give them any kind of instructions before filming?

P: Well, the main "battle" I would always have—and this is a traditional issue with cameramen for documentaries—is that

the cameraman always wanted to set up the nicest shot he could and I was willing to let them do that but sometimes it's more important not to break the mood or not to tire your subjects.

A: And so, sometimes you had to ask the same question again to the same witness?

P: No, this would happen before the interviews. But sometimes you would have to set up the light and ask the person to sit so you can set it up. But I realized that older people can get tired. I remember one story which is sort of funny. When I first called Joseph Atlas on the phone. He is the Polish Jew that appears several times in the film.

A: He is also the first one you name in the film.

P: Yes. He is sort of my starting symbol in a way, the little boy of fourteen. He talks about his experience almost in fairy tale terms. I'd had an assistant who had talked to a number of people and had said "this one's good, this one's not so good," and I made up my mind who I was going to interview. I called Joseph Atlas and he started asking all these annoying questions about what my attitude was and what my approach was, and I said to myself "The guy is a pain in the neck." I did not cancel the interview but I told my cameraman "I don't care about the 'image.' Just set the cameras, we have to go quickly." And it turned out to be one of the most important interviews. The moment I asked my first question I realized "Oh, this is good." It does not look very pretty because I did not allow my poor cameraman to set up the lights properly. So you cannot predict these things.

A: When you were editing the film, what were the main problems you ran into?

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P: There were so many. I would say the main problem was understanding the material, understanding what these people were saying. I do not mean that literally. I just mean that I knew nothing about religion. I knew nothing about Christians. I spent months just listening to the footage over and over and over again. And in fact a lot of the footage that is in the film is footage that I ignored the first forty or fifty times I heard it. It did not seem important. I thought something else was important. It took a long time for me to realize: "*No*! *That* was the important stuff."

A: There were also a few sequences that were important at first and you could not include them?

P: Yes. There were a number of sequences that I am extraordinarily surprised *now* that they are not in the film. They were passages that sometimes had things that were too explicit, in a way. At first I thought "This is perfect." And then I got bored with it. It did not really have the authenticity, the mystery too, but also the authenticity. In the first section—it is because it is the first that it is so important — when I use M. et Mme. Heritier. I say to her "But you kept them anyway. Why?" "*Oh, j'sais pas*," "*J'sais pas*" "I don't know," is not something that right away I saw as important.

A: Now as opposed to some survivors who sometimes, in their interviews, are telling stories for the first time, the people of Le Chambon you interviewed had the opportunity to tell these stories before. Was that a problem?

P: It is a very interesting question actually because I think unlike films that include interviews with survivors who *have* told their stories over and over again, these people had *not* told their stories over and over again. These were stories they *did not* tell. The Jews who were in Le Chambon did *not* talk about it that much, and certainly the people of Le

Chambon did not. There were a few young Chambonnais who sort of hung around and listened and they had never heard these people talking about these things. And when there was family, the family would listen with incredible attention. No, I did not have that problem.

A: Sometimes in the film, one gets the impression that you have been influenced by Ophüls and Lanzmann. Is that a real influence? Did you do certain things on purpose? I am thinking about two or three different things. In the interview of Lamirand there is a close-up on his hands and Ophüls does that a lot, showing people's hands as they hesitate or when they are embarrassed. And of course the train that is completely opposed to the train shown in Lanzmann's film, and the village of the people that is completely opposed to the Polish villages in *Shoah*. Did you think about these parallels when you were making the film or did you realize this after?

P: There are rather simple answers to these questions. First of all in terms of *Shoah*, I had not seen *Shoah* when I finished my film so *Shoah* had absolutely no influence on me. It has *since* but it had no influence on me at that time. In fact, when I saw *Shoah*, I was stunned because one of the strongest impressions one gets from *Shoah* is that sense of having been constantly on a train and there was my little film with its little train, and it did look like it was a deliberate counterpart. Ophüls, of course, I had seen his films and I admire them.

A: What about that interview of Lamirand?

P: The interesting thing is that Lamirand comes out rather well in *Le Chagrin et la pitié*. You know he is very charming and dapper, and he comes across fine. In fact, I believe that is one of the reasons that Lamirand agreed to be interviewed by me. I will tell you that I do not like shots of hands. I do

not like cut-aways. It is an editing technique that one almost *has* to use. You are not like a writer: you cannot jump from one sentence to the next sentence. You have to get from point A to point B. If you have a jump cut you have to bridge it and it is going to be a painting on the wall... The biggest cliché in cut-aways is hands generally. So the last thing I would want to do is hands. There are only two real cut-aways like that in the whole film. And they are both hands. No, one is not a cut-away, one is deliberate. When you see Lamirand's hands, his hands are closed and the other hands are Pastor Theis' and his hands are open. It is very trivial metaphorically but I liked it. I needed a cut-away at that point.

A: But you did not think of Ophüls while doing this?

P: No, I really did not. I needed a cut-away. I was cutting something in what Lamirand said. I was not distorting him. I doubt that there is a filmmaker—this may sound like a terribly boastful thing to say—who is more cautious than I am in terms of representing fairly what the people say. You can make anybody look like anything. The power that we have when we edit these things is just so tremendous. No matter how I present somebody, I wanted them to say "this is what I was."

A: Did you choose the setting for the interviews? For example with the picture of Martin Luther King behind Pastor Theis... it just happened to be there?

P: That was the retirement place where Edouard Theis was living, and that was what was indeed on the wall behind his desk. That is the shot that actually ends with the hands. It was an irresistible shot. I did not put the picture there. In fact I would not do that. There was even in that shot, as it is panning down, the Bible. It is the *Ancien Testament*, the *Old Testament*. I did not put it there. It was there.

A: What kind of scenes did you have to prepare for? The train is not running anymore.

P: No that is right. The train, I rented.

A: Anything else?

P: I had to rent the services of the two railway engineers. It is their hobby. One, I think, is a chemist and I do not know what the other one does. They used to like doing that. Unfortunately they cannot do it anymore.

A: What is your answer to people or critics who say that your film is too optimistic?

P: I must tell you that people used to express that concern before they saw the film. They have not said that after seeing the film. I think that fear existed that, somehow, focusing on the good would create an alibi that would let the world off the hook. But people realize that is not what happens. In fact, the good makes you accountable because against the good you have to ask yourself, "What would I have done?" Those are tough questions. Next to the evil, you do not ask yourself these questions. You walk out feeling wonderful. "I am such a wonderful guy. I am not Hitler or Goebbels."

A: It makes people aware that it was possible to act differently.

P: It also underscores the fact that it was possible for people to act well. The survivors' community was traditionally very concerned that one might play up the righteous Gentiles in a way that would do exactly what you were quoting. I mean that it would take the edge off the experience. But not a single survivor who has seen the film has come away with that feeling. In fact, I have been criticized in exactly the opposite direction.

I have been criticized a few times for a line that some people think is much too tough, rather than the opposite, and that is the line on Christianity: "The Holocaust occurred in the heart of Christian Europe and would not have been possible without the apathy or complicity of most Christians, and without the virulent tradition of anti-Semitism that had long infested the very soul of Christianity." People have said to me: "This is like a slap in the face." But the good Christians that I have known are Christians who are ready and eager to face the extent of Christian responsibility. And the Christian responsibility is massive.

A: How do you situate your film in comparison to *Le Chagrin et la Pitié* and *Shoah*? I ask this because it is a documentary and it is one of the excellent documentaries made in French dealing with the Holocaust.

P: First of all, I am flattered by the question because those are both extraordinarily important films. But, at the same time, I would not even know how to answer that question. I think *Le Chagrin et la Pitié* is a remarkable film in many respects. It is also very much a film of its time. I doubt that Ophüls would have made the same film today. Probably, the most glaring omission is that the film conveys no real sense of the importance of the Jewish question in France at that time. You know, *that* was the test of France then. That was the moral test. And it talks about all sorts of things, but it does not talk about that.

A: It is not a film on the Holocaust.

P: No, but it is a film about French attitudes and French responsibility. There is a very brief interview with Claude Lévy which is very good actually. But it is very brief and there are I think one or two other references. But again, if I had made a film in 1968, I probably would cringe at what

it would be because I have changed so completely since 1968.

A: The context is different. I mean at that time it was a necessary step also for the French to face their responsibilities.

P: Perhaps it was a necessary step. I do not know that anybody would have been capable of making a film that would have realized the importance of the Jewish question at that time. There are still people today who do not realize it so it would be the most unfair of criticisms to self-righteously make that point. However, having said that, that to me probably would be the main difference with *Le Chagrin et la Pitié*. My film, *Weapons of the Spirit*, puts the Jewish question at the very heart of any moral assessment of France. Even to the point of almost deliberately brushing aside things that other people consider important. For instance, I have very little on the Resistance because the Resistance simply did not interest me. I think anyway, that the Resistance is essentially a myth. I mean, there was a small Resistance, but what has been made of it is simply not historically accurate. Incidentally, the Resistance failed that test which people are still having great difficulty facing. The Resistance never realized the importance of helping the Jews. The Resistance did not stop a single train to Auschwitz.

A: What about *Shoah*?

P: I told Lanzmann that my fantasy was that my film would be considered a little bit like the little brother of *Shoah*. One deals with the magnitude of the evil...

A: ...the systematic extermination, while yours is about an exception.

P: *Weapons of the Spirit* is certainly about the exception. Obviously I believe that the exception is important. I believe that many people would go see *Shoah* after seeing *Weapons of the Spirit* who might not have gone otherwise because *Weapons of the Spirit* is an entry point for this material, for this history. *Shoah* is not an entry point. Nobody goes to see a nine hour film who already does not have a certain commitment. Also, it is very scary material. People need to be brought into this material.

A: How do you see the role of responsible leaders in all this? Trocmé was a leader but the people of Le Chambon were still doing the main work.

P: It is a very good question. I worked very, very hard to find the balance. I think that Trocmé is a strong presence in the film. At the same time I do not have this image that leaders create something out of nothing. I believe that leadership is overvalued, that leadership, at its best, reflects. I tried to suggest the extraordinary balance that occurred in Le Chambon. Trocmé was an extraordinary man, Pastor Theis was an extraordinary man. These were brilliant people who really understood what was called for.

A: You are a man of cinema. How do you think this influenced your representation of the Holocaust as it is, in comparison with the work of an historian or a philosopher. What is specific to your experience as a filmmaker? Did you learn something by making other films that helped you to make this film?

P: I am sure that of course is true. But I like history very much. I am fascinated by history. I was just having lunch today with Michael Marrus who is one of the greatest historians on the Holocaust. I am proud that I have such friends. I really admire Michael's brilliance. I said that as a prologue to say that historians place such a large emphasis

on the written word, on the document. And that is only a pale reflection of the richness that is history. We filmmakers have the opportunity of showing pictures, of showing faces, of showing photographs and directing the eye on a photograph where we think it's important. We have the opportunity of playing music. I believe there's an almost magical connection between things. I remember talking to an historian once, a very important historian, about something that I had discovered in a newsreel. He was quite surprised because I realized he had never bothered to look at newsreels. I think there is extraordinarily valuable information that a film can provide.

A: Like information about everything that cannot be put in words.

P: And also things that can be put in words. Part of the tremendous danger of film is that you have to make things so simple. There are no foot-notes. It is hard to even get away with a parenthesis in a film. It has to have this clean, linear structure, and you're chopping away. There is a great danger in that and I am envious of what an historian can do. On the other hand, that very obligation to simplify can force you to really look for the most profound truths. In a way, historians can get away with: "on the one hand... on the other hand..." and you do not really know what anything is about. It gives you massive information but it does not cut down to the bone about what was going on. When I was editing the film, I was wondering how long the film was going to be and I did not want it to be long. I wanted it to be reasonably short. At one point I thought three hours was wonderful. And then I realized it cannot be three hours because it had to be modest in appearance, like its subject. The form had to match the subject. Which is also why I could not do any movie tricks. I could not do anything fancy. It had to be extraordinarily simple. It is hard to be simple. In order to shorten the film, in order to remind

myself of this need to trim, trim, trim, I wrote in big letters over my editing table a sentence I had stumbled on at that time in the writings of Jacques Maritain, the great Catholic thinker: "*Plus un artiste est grand, plus il élimine*," "The greater the artist, the more he eliminates." In books you do not have to eliminate. You do not have that pressure to eliminate. With film, you have no choice.

A: And you have to pick the size that fits the subject.

P: That is true. Also, I truly believe that the more you understand something, the more you should be capable of explaining it to a smart ten-year-old. I truly believe that. With some exceptions of course, some things that are beyond a ten-year-old's emotional and psychological experience. But that is really the test: to say things simply. And that is a test for filmmakers. That challenge is tremendously energizing.

A: Were you thinking about the future when you were making the film. Was it a way for you to tell people "Well, if anything similar happens again this is a way to react"?

P: It was a way of telling myself that. It was a way of convincing myself that I can raise my children with a certain level of optimism that humanity is not irredeemably evil. I think humanity is pretty terrible but it is a cop-out to forget that the choice is ours. And that it is possible to resist evil at any time.

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COLOMBAT

THE HOLOCAUST IN FRENCH FILM

"At the moment I speak to you, the icy water of the ponds and ruins
is filling up the hollows of the charnel house.
A water as cold and murky as our own bad memories.
War is napping, but with one eye always open."
J. Cayrol and A. Resnais,
Night and Fog

THE HOLOCAUST IN FRENCH FILM

Because of its direct and violent impact on very large audiences at one time, the evolving representation of the Holocaust in French cinema is extremely revealing of the evolution of the various conceptions of French responsibility in the permanence of hatred and anti-Semitism.

In consequence, the study of the representation of the Holocaust in French cinema can play a central role in understanding how any society deals or refuses to deal with the darkest and most threatening aspects of its collective psyche.

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THE HOLOCAUST IN FRENCH FILM

by
ANDRÉ PIERRE COLOMBAT

The SCARECROW FILMMAKERS SERIES

Scarecrow Press, Inc.
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The SCARECROW FILMMAKERS SERIES

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The persecution and deportation of the Jews in France lies at the heart of the French people's enduring embarrassment about the Occupation. In addition to providing us with a unique key to the study of the progressive exclusion of the Jews from French political, economic, and public life during the war, studying the evolution of French cinema's representation of the Holocaust also enables us to understand the formation and the persistence of many long-lasting taboos.

After the war, the first films made about the deportations in France insisted on depicting what had actually happened in the camps. The Jews were thus presented as one group among the many victims of the Nazis' brutal persecutions. This period includes Resnais' most acclaimed documentary, *Night and Fog*. Gradually, however, while insisting on the heroic actions of the Résistance, films started reminding audiences that there had been French collaborators, always depicted as evil but isolated traitors. It was not until after Ophüls' masterpiece *The Sorrow and the Pity* that a real tide of films was made confronting the wide popularity of Pétain and the Vichy government's responsibility for the persecution of the Jews. And most recently, with the disappearance of the last camp survivors imminent, many French films analyze how the memory of the Holocaust should be preserved for future generations and what we can learn from such senseless events. Lanzmann's celebrated film *Shoah* is at the heart of these ongoing debates.

Part I analyzes the evolution of the representation of the Holocaust in French cinema from 1940 to the present. It examines the difficulties with which French cinema answered the three

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questions: What happened? Who is responsible? and How can we be sure we will never forget? Part II gathers detailed analyses of the nine most widely praised French films dealing with the Holocaust (films by Resnais, Ophüls, Malle, Losey, Lanzmann, and Sauvage). Includes stills, filmography, bibliography, index, and a lengthy interview with director Pierre Sauvage.

André Pierre Colombat (MA, Université Lyon II; Ph.D., Washington University) is an Assistant Professor of French, Loyola College, Baltimore. His last book was entitled *Deleuze et la littérature*. He has published numerous articles on French literature and civilization, and is working on the implications of Gilles Deleuze's seminal books on cinema for contemporary film studies.

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Contents

Introduction ..... ix-xx

Part I: The Evolution of the Representation of the Holocaust 1-118

1. Persecution in the "Golden Age" of French Cinema, 1940-1945 3-17

2. Deportation, Resistance and Betrayal, 1946-1961 19-27

3. Nazis, Collaborators and the Holocaust, 1961-1970 29-47

4. The Struggle for Accuracy, 1971-1985 49-96

5. Facing the Future; Fighting Oblivion, 1985-present 97-118

Part II: Cinematographic Studies 119-365

6. Alain Resnais' *Night and Fog* 121-166

   a. Images to Be Seen 124-139

   b. Words to Be Heard 139-149

   c. The Art of Alain Resnais 149-166

7. Marcel Ophüls 167-259

   a. *The Sorrow and the Pity* 167-211

      - A Chronicle 173-194

      - Disjunctions, Distortions and Irony 194-204

      - The Art of Marcel Ophüls 205-211

   b. *The Memory of Justice* 212-223

   c. *Hotel Terminus* 223-259

      - How to Tell the Life of a Nazi 230-241

      - Irony and the Official Story 241-259

8. Ambiguity and Mastery in Three Renowned Fiction Films 261-297

   a. Louis Malle's *Lacombe Lucien* and *Goodbye Children* 261-287

   b. Joseph Losey's *Mr. Klein* 288-297

9. Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* 299-344

   a. This Is the Place 306-322

   b. To Know and to See 323-344

10. Pierre Sauvage's *Weapons of the Spirit* 345-365

Conclusion 367-374

Appendix: An Interview with Pierre Sauvage 375-387

Filmography 389-395
Bibliography 397-415
Notes 417-425
Index 427-435
About the Author 437

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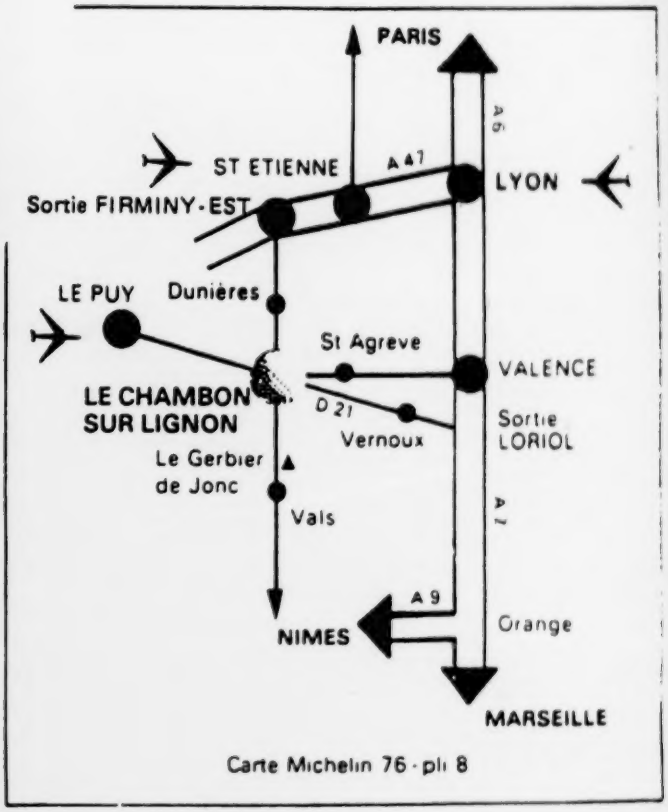

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